the weekly Standard

ALL THAT KEN BURNS JAZZ
DIANA WEST

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As President, you will shape the land we leave behind. Understand that all Americans share a love of our landscape. Unite us in an effort to stop the development of our still-wild places – places like the untouched areas of our National Forests, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Everglades. And recognize, as Americans, that we have welcomed and rejoiced in the protection of our most beautiful places as parks and monuments, including the newly-named Grand-Canyon Parashant and Sequoia National Monuments. We urge you to honor and increase our legacy of protected wild lands.

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Contents

January 15, 2001 • Volume 6, Number 17

2 Scrapbook. . . . . *Sid's pals, Bill's polls, and more.*

4 Casual. . . . . *Joseph Epstein, crooner.*

5 Correspondence. . . *On* Bush *v.* Gore, Exhibitionism, *etc.*

7 Editorial. . . *Competent Conservatives, Reactionary Liberals*

Articles

10 What Clinton Did to the Left *He tamed them, but their animal spirits may be returning.* . . . . . BY DAVID FRUM

12 What Clinton Did to the Democrats *Nothing good.* . . . . . BY FRED BARNES

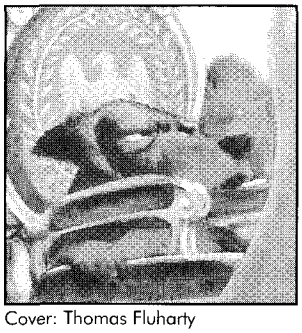
14 Ashcroft in the Crosshairs *The Borking machine is trained on a new target.* . . . . . BY MATTHEW REES

16 Nostradamus vs. Bush *The president-elect's critics make fools of themselves.* . . . . . BY JOHN PODHORETZ

17 What Clinton Did to the Economy *Surprisingly little harm.* . . . . . BY IRWIN M. STELZER

20 War Through Weakness *Barak's policies have increased the chances of conflict in the Middle East.* . . . . . BY TOM ROSE

Features



Cover: Thomas Fluharty

22 Mr. Bush, Tear Down This Roadblock

Reopen Pennsylvania Avenue. . . . . . BY ANDREW FERGUSON

25 The Clinton Legacy Abroad

His sins of omission leave us unprepared for the danger of the next decade. . . . . . BY ROBERT KAGAN

29 Women of the Clinton Scandals

Whatever happened to Paula, Gennifer, Monica, Connie, Sally, and so on? . . . . . BY MATT LABASH

Books & Arts

33 All That Jazz *Ken Burns in black and white.* . . . . . BY DIANA WEST

36 The Poverty of Nations *Is it bad culture or bad laws that keep some countries poor?.* . . . . . BY MICHAEL NOVAK

38 Scenes of Clerical Life *The life of a seventeenth-century bishop makes an improbably good book.* . . . BY RUSSELL HITTINGER

41 Valley of the Dahls *The misanthropic stories of Roald the Rotten.* . . . . . BY BRIAN MURRAY

44 Parody. . . . . *On the death of* George *magazine.*

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Sid's List

Arriving unbidden on THE SCRAPBOOK'S desk last week—who knows how many layers of forwarding removed from its original and unknown recipient—was a most interesting copy of an e-mail recently sent by White House staff ideologist Sidney Blumenthal. The actual message in that e-mail is for present purposes inconsequential: It's just a full-text copy of a late December *Miami Herald* story on the "undervote" in Florida's majority-black voting precincts. What's truly interesting about the document, instead, is something that a quirk of Blumenthal's office computer has revealed: the full roster of people to whom the e-mail was addressed. The delightful result? Having inadvertently acquired Blumenthal's *Miami Herald* missive, THE SCRAPBOOK seems also to have acquired a longish list of folks through whom he likes to spread his special brand of "information."

The list surpasses self-parody. Its first two names: Clinton-ophantic columnists Joe Conason and Gene Lyons. Followed by, among others: Jane Mayer and Jeffrey Toobin at the *New Yorker*; Jill Abramson, Eleanor Randolph, and Anthony Lewis at the *New York Times*; "Greta" at *cnn.com*; Harold Evans of *U.S. News*; and Sean Wilentz of Princeton and Todd Gitlin of NYU.

Speaking of academics, THE SCRAPBOOK is puzzled by the presence in such company of Cass Sunstein of the University of Chicago, who is, as he himself has recently written to this magazine, an extremely non-partisan fellow, motivated only and always by principle. Go figure.

Go figure, too, the inclusion on Sidney's list of columnists John Judis, Michael Tomasky, and Robert Scheer. And a couple of people at the online magazine *Salon*. And Tom Oliphant of the *Boston Globe*. And unsuccessful author David Brock. And so on, and so on, and so on. None of these esteemed ladies and gentlemen would ever actually take *instruction* from a Blumenthal e-mail. Would they?

One other question, come to think of it: What official, government business could Sidney Blumenthal possibly have been performing when he wrote and mailed this thing while at work in the White House? ♦

How Clinton Won

The best reporting on the Clinton administration is appearing only as the president prepares to depart. For example, the morning of New Year's Eve, the *Washington Post*'s lead story was a superb review, by White House reporter John F. Harris, of the unprecedented extent to which the Clinton presidency was dependent upon public opinion polling. "No previous president read public opinion surveys with the same hypnotic intensity" as Clinton, Harris wrote. "And no predecessor has integrated his pollster so thoroughly into the policymaking operation of his White House." That would be Mark J. Penn, who ran a private poll for Clinton "at least once a week all through the second term."

The president's defensive explanation for this obsession with public opinion numbers is already familiar: that he has used those numbers not to decide what he thought, but to help him choose the words by which he would persuade other people to think it, too. Harris bends over backwards to be fair to Clinton, and acknowledges that it's "true" the president didn't "always" do what Penn told him to.

But Harris's legwork leads him unmistakably close to an entirely opposite conclusion. According to unnamed "close associates" of Clinton, he is a man "for whom polls fill important intellectual and emotional needs." Polls were "the essential device" by which the president survived an often hostile Washington. Polls were even, it seems, the essential device by which the president survived his impeachment ordeal.

Hanging on the wall of Mark J. Penn's office, Harris reports, is a framed copy of the *Washington Post* from the day Clinton was acquitted. And on this *Post* front page, Bill Clinton has scrawled one word: "Thanks."

But no thanks, THE SCRAPBOOK would add. ♦

The View from the Faculty Club

For its Jan. 5 issue, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, industry newsletter of eggheadery, asked a number of "scholars and writers" to predict how future historians will view the Supreme Court's recent election-deciding ruling. The result, the *Chronicle*'s headline on this feature promised, was "9 Views on *Bush* v. *Gore*."

There must be a new, new, new math now being taught in university-land, because the "9 views" in ques-

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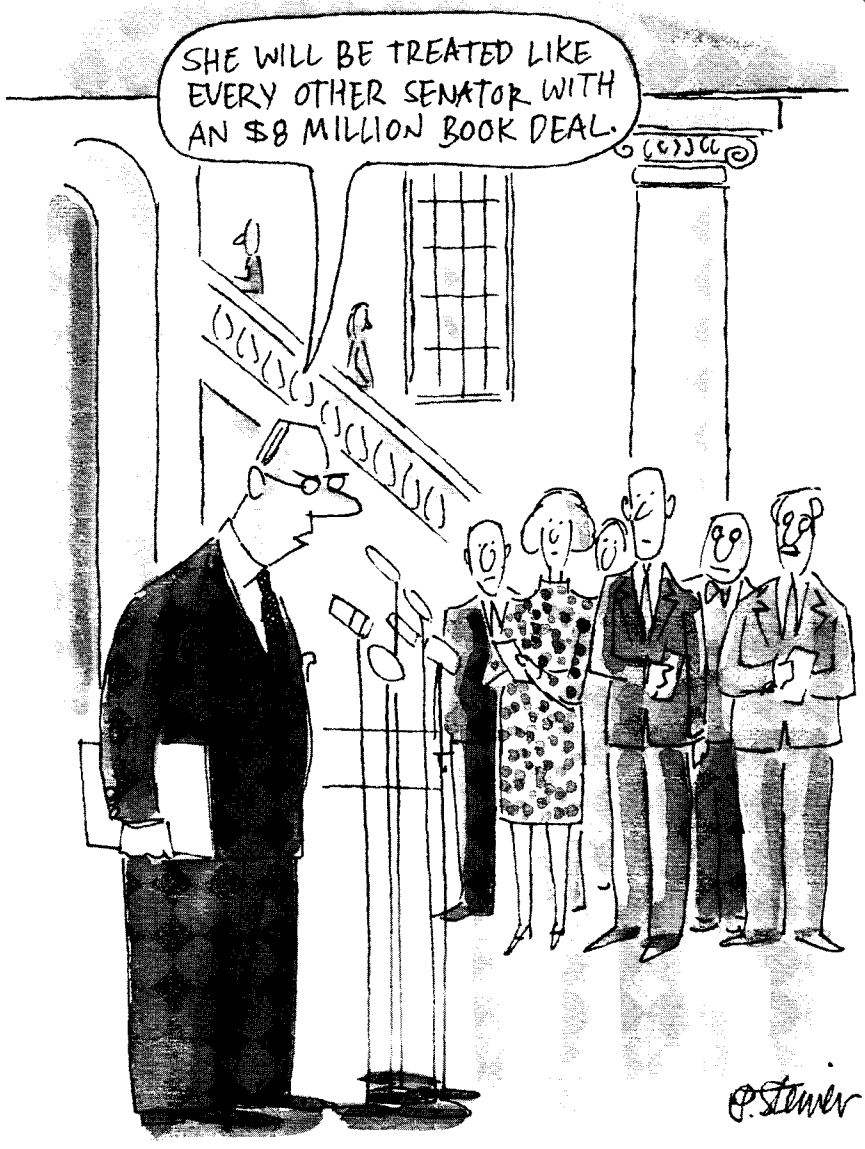

tion, so far as THE SCRAPBOOK can tell, actually add up to only two. One of them, beautifully expressed by the extremely non-partisan Cass Sunstein of the University of Chicago (see "Sid's List," above), is that *Bush* v. *Gore* will be judged "illegitimate, undemocratic, and unprincipled." Six other academics, plus Gore Vidal, reach pretty much the same conclusion, while writing less well.

And then there's a lonely, token dissent by WEEKLY STANDARD friend and contributor Harvey C. Mansfield, professor of government at Harvard University. Which THE SCRAPBOOK likes so much it reprints now:

"This decision saved the country from possible turmoil and a good deal of further partisan confusion. In this election, there seemed to be more partisanship after people voted than before. I heard hardly anyone agreeing with the thesis of the person he didn't vote for in the matter of the Supreme Court. So I voted for Bush, and I very much supported the final decision made by the U.S. Supreme Court. It very correctly overruled the Florida Supreme Court, which had gone much too far in the direction of judicial activism. And it took an activist majority in the U.S. Supreme Court to correct an even more activist one in the Florida Supreme Court.

"I don't think it was a violation of principle by the U.S. Supreme Court. It's true they mainly support states' rights, but I don't think that's a principle that people can hold to on every occasion. I think they would have made a grave mistake and looked quite foolish if they had held to the right of the Florida Supreme Court to abuse its discretion in this matter. It would have been better if Florida had been able to decide its own affairs constitutionally, but states' rights are not an absolute—we live under a constitution that also has a federal government. It's good for Republicans and conservatives to remember this. But it's not inconsistent or malicious of them to resort to the final constitutional power of the U.S. Supreme Court.

"It was unfortunate that the majority of the court had to go to the equal-protection clause, which hasn't been applied in voting cases before this and has potential for future mischief if it comes to be supposed that equal protection requires each vote to have the same power. That would run counter to our federal system. But I think the five conservative justices agreed to using the equal-protection clause in order to get two more votes, from Breyer and Souter, and that was a reasonable and statesmanlike thing to do in the circumstances.

"The two parties were very much themselves throughout. The Republicans stand for the rule of law, and the Democrats for the rule of the people. And the Democrats, because they stand for the rule of the people, believe that rule should be paramount, and that technicalities are subordinate to that will. Whereas the Republicans believe in doing things properly or legally. It really was a contest of principle between two parties." ♦

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Casual

Singing (sort of) in the Rain

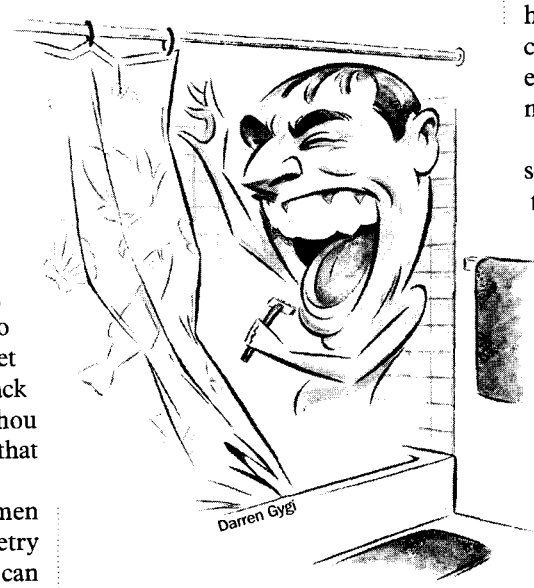
I have a friend who scored heavily early in life and became a venture capitalist. Over lunch one day he entertained me by recounting the nutty projects that people brought to him for financing: a geriatric dog food, an electric fountain pen, cell-phone implants. I wish he were still capital venturesome, for I have an item that needs a backer—not yet invented, true, but one I long for: a karaoke machine that you can take into the shower.

The Sharper Image, Hammacher Schlemmer, Brookstone, and other consumer old-boy-costly-goofy-toy catalogs sell radios you can take into the shower, but thus far no waterproof karaoke machines. Pity. I can so easily see myself, shampoo in hair, soap on bristly cheeks—I am among the small but happy minority who have learned the art of shaving in the shower—microphone in hand, belting out "I've Got A Right to Sing the Blues" or "I Guess I'll Get the Papers and Go Home" or "Mack the Knife." Oh, Bobby Darin, thou shouldst be alive not at this but at that hour!

Older generations of literary men and women have had yards of poetry by memory. I envy people who can keep the vocabularies of four or five languages in their heads. I have had only bits of popular songs boppin' around in mine. But of late I have taken to memorizing entire songs. I do so partly as a stay against the inevitable loss of those little grey cells that Hercule Poirot so often refers to, and partly for the sheer pleasure of singing them to myself, on long walks but more often in the shower.

I'd like to be able to report that I've just about mastered the Gershwin song-book; or committed all of Cole Porter and Rodgers & Hart to memory. But aside from Porter's "You're the Top," which I do have by memory—"You're the nimble tread of the feet of Fred Astaire, / You're an O'Neill drama, you're Whistler's mama, / You're camembert"—my taste has run to simpler, more off-beat tunes. Among them have been "Ain't Misbehavin'," "I'm Late, I'm Late," "Fine Spring Morning," "You've Come A Long Way from St. Louis," "Comment Allez Vous," "Stars Fell on Alabama," "The Way You Look Tonight," and "Sweet and Slow."

I began with mnemonically more difficult songs. One of the first was



Noel Coward's "Mad Dogs and Englishmen," which I love for its intricacy. I later memorized his "Regency Rakes"—"Complacency never forsakes / roistering Regency rakes"—which shows the clear line, at least in this strain, between Coward and W.S. Gilbert. But these songs need fairly frequent rehearsal, lest whole chunks of them slip from my mind, which they inevitably do.

I do better with shorter songs. And it came as a surprise to learn how short some songs are. "The Way You Look Tonight"—"Keep that breathless charm," etc.—is two lines shorter than a sonnet; Tom Lehrer's "Hanukkah in Santa Monica"—"Roshashonna I spend in Arizuna, / And Yom Kippa way down in Mississippa"—is only one line longer; and "Miss Emily Brown"—that lovable, huggable girl who's coming to town—is precisely sonnet-length. "Send in the Clowns," Stephen Sondheim's one entirely memorable song, took a bit more work, but was worth it.

Above all I've come to prefer the songs sung by my idols in this realm, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, and Fats Waller. All three could take the dopiest of lyrics and make them amusing by ironically undercutting them even while singing them. "My Very Good Friend the Milkman" contains two lines that may be as wretched as any ever written—"Then there's a very friendly fellow, who brings me all the latest real estate news, / And every day he sends me blueprints of cottages with country views"—and yet Fats Waller, even while mocking them, is able to make them charming.

I often use one or another of these songs in the morning as a mental calisthenic—"cloak and suiters by the oodles, say it to their cute French poodles"—a way to ease my little grey cells into the day. But they have other uses. "I'm stepping out, my dear, to breathe an atmosphere that simply reeks with class" is especially useful to have in mind when stepping out into an atmosphere—an academic conference, say—that doesn't. Sometimes the sheer throw-away cleverness sends me: "I'm a supper-club fanatic, / thunderstorm electrostatic, / from three points I'm automatic, / I'm your guy." Yo.

Donald Tovey, the great English music critic, once claimed that he had enough music by heart to play at his piano for seven, possibly eight weeks. I now have enough song lyrics memorized to last, maybe, twenty minutes. A waterproof karaoke machine, I feel, would encourage me to expand my repertoire greatly. To own such a machine would be heaven. Or, as in the old joke about Nikita Khrushchev making love to Marilyn Monroe, heaven for me, hell for my neighbors.

Joseph Epstein

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Last Word on the Court

In "Equal Protection Run Amok," John J. DiIulio Jr. expresses unfounded trepidation about the long-term effects of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Bush* v. *Gore* decision (Dec. 25). For several reasons, *Bush* v. *Gore* does not substantially threaten federalism. Tod Lindberg's preceding article, "Al Gore's Legal Doomsday Machine," strikes nearer the determinative point of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision: The process fiddled and fumbled until time ran out.

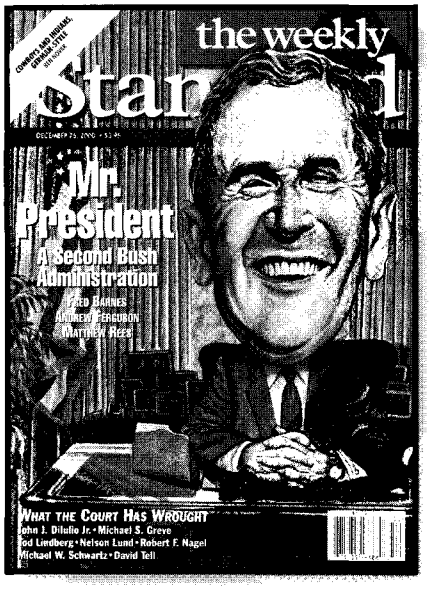
The decisive holding that time had expired on December 12 was grounded in an emphasis on the significance of the Florida legislature's having chosen to take advantage of the "safe harbor" provisions of Title 3 U.S. Code Section 5. That section exempts from U.S. congressional challenges those presidential electors identified through a legally instituted state electoral process by the prescribed deadline. The Florida electoral scheme's involvement with that federal statute furnished one of two federal-law grounds supporting the U.S. Supreme Court's jurisdiction, the other being equal protection of law.

The per curiam opinion joined by five justices—the only component of the legal literature handed down that will be binding legal authority—acknowledges the U.S. Constitution's literal language designating state legislatures, as distinguished from entire tripartite state governments, arbiters of the conduct of state elections, including federal and particularly presidential elections. It nevertheless leaves state courts room to interpret legislation and even fashion remedies to correct perceived omissions in legislation, but recites that they must, when they do so, conform to the equal protection, one-person, one-vote norms imposed by the U.S. Constitution. Neither state legislatures nor state judiciaries can waive or erode those norms.

Seven justices agreed that the Florida Supreme Court had defaulted that duty, but only five of those considered the deadline parameter sufficiently important to declare that time to correct the equal protection problem had run out. The others would have dismissed the legislature's selection of the "safe harbor" for its electors as trivial. In sum, the point for which *Bush* v. *Gore* furnishes precedential authority vindicates the prerogatives of state legislatures much more than it overbears those of state judiciaries.

In addition, the per curiam volubly signals this is a unique and singular case, by no means to be applied to any except virtually identical, therefore exceedingly rare, situations presenting facts identical to its own—to be "limited to its facts," in legal parlance.

But the less legalistic, more political point is strategic, gratifying to proponents of pluralistic democracy, and appealingly consistent with the Bush campaign's postelection posture. Justice Ginsburg's paeans to deference to state courts were blatantly outcome-oriented,



as she is hardly so disposed where that principle does not suit her views of individual civil liberties, as in abortion cases. Her stance is consistent with a long-standing leftist contention that conservatives are obliged to adhere to their advocated standards of consistency of principle, whereas liberals, who deem their own vindication the highest good and so advocate situational expediency in the interest of prevailing, are entitled to wide doctrinal latitude.

Ginsburg's snippy omission of an expression of respect for the Court she sits on in concluding her dissent, and Justice John Paul Stevens's bitter denunciation bordering on impeachable malfeasance (a lawyer who said the same of the Court would clearly be subject to ethical sanctions), express only the self-righteous outrage of frustrated agendists.

It is most refreshing to see the left's long-standing and heretofore successful anti-ethic, "The benefit of our expediencies for us, the detriment of your principles for you," give way to a level-field contest based on reciprocity, or, in other words, a goose-and-gander rule restored at last.

John G. Lankford
San Pedro Town, Belize

I agree with John J. DiIulio Jr.'s and Michael Greve's assertion that the U.S. Supreme Court's reliance on Equal Protection grounds for their per curiam opinion was improper and very worrisome going forward ("Equal Protection Run Amok," "The *Real* Division in the Court," Dec. 25). And this undermines Nelson Lund's otherwise welcome suggestion that a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court has now found the courage to do what the Constitution commands even when its decision will be met by derision in circles of fashionable opinion ("An Act of Courage," Dec. 25).

Had Justices O'Connor and Kennedy been willing to sign the Article II portions of the chief justice's opinion, there would have been no good reason to consider the equal protection claim raised by the Bush team. It is easy to see why O'Connor and Kennedy couldn't bring themselves to do so. It would have required them (a) to admit that such a thing as judicial activism does in fact exist and (b) to do so in reference to a constitutional provision that expressly confers power on a state legislature, seemingly in derogation of the courts.

The close call was between invoking the U.S. Supreme Court's "political question" doctrine and beginning the process of revitalizing our tattered republican institutions—as Robert Nagel's "From *U.S.* v. *Nixon* to *Bush* v. *Gore*" (Dec. 25) suggests—or deciding the case on its merits. It is reasonable to argue that the greater civics lesson would have been for the Florida legislature and Congress to correct the errors of the Florida Supreme Court than for the U.S. Supreme Court to act as it did. It is also reasonable to argue that the Florida Supreme Court's error was a specifically judicial error, one of

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judges improperly interpreting a legal text, which is susceptible of appellate review. Either decision is wiser, more reasoned, and more reasonable than any of the Florida Supreme Court's three decisions.

NATHANIEL T. TRELEASE
Cheyenne, WY

PLEASE THANK MICHAEL GREVE for his analysis of the Supreme Court's decision. As an attorney who has studied the decisions issued by the Court, I appreciate Greve's careful analysis and his willingness to criticize the majority's amorphous equal protection argument.

BILL PEPER
Warren, MI

JOHN J. DIIULIO JR., protesting the Supreme Court's *Bush* v. *Gore* decision, seemed to miss an important point. The Court was not replacing the authority of Congress to deal with the Florida mess—it was pointing out that the Congress had already done so with previous laws. The Constitution itself had already decreed that the state legislature, not the state court, should decide on the selection of electors. And federal statute had already decreed that the state legislature's rules for doing so could not be changed after the election, not even by the state courts.

Constitutional law and federal statute were seemingly being ignored in Florida. George W. Bush asked the highest federal court to decide whether or not this was actually the case. The Supreme Court said it was, and ordered a stop to the lawbreaking in Florida. Everyone from gigantic corporations to schnooks sitting in some alleyway knows that when some law, written to protect your rights, is being ignored or abused, you have a right to go to court to seek redress. Why was it illegitimate for Bush to do so? Why was it illegitimate for the Supreme Court to do what every other court in the land does?

It's bad enough to hear liberals repeating this tiresome cant. But a few too many conservative voices are joining the chorus, too. Let's all just say it together: Courts are *supposed* to make legal rulings. Case closed.

J.L. SCHALLERT
Cambridge, WI

SCHNITZEL WESTERNS

I HAD CHILLS run down my spine while reading Ben Novak's "Cowboys *und* Indians" (Dec. 25), as it took me back to the early 1940s when this then 10-year-old devoured at least 40 of Karl May's 70-plus *Gesammelte Werke*. Novak is right in asserting that Einstein and Schweitzer were hardly alone in their appreciation of Karl May—and it did not end with Hermann Hesse and Zuckmayer.

My generation grew up with Old Shatterhand and Kara Ben Nemsi in the midst of World War II (in Berlin, in my case). Somehow two of these volumes, *Winnetou I* and *Kapitan Kaimanare*, are still in my possession. Novak didn't mention Winnetou's sister, Nscho-tschi. I wonder how many young readers fell in love with her, as I did.

Thanks for the memories.

GEB SOMMER
Lexington, SC

DON'T GET ME WRONG

THOUGH MARGARET HILDEBRAND found more than a few kind words to say about my new book, *Exhibitionism: Art in an Era of Intolerance*, much of her review is misleading and mistaken ("Liberal Arts," Dec. 25). Hildebrand ascribes to me opinions that I do not hold and even some that I have challenged publicly, such as the offensive and absurdist notion that not everyone is capable of appreciating high art. In my book the only praise I find for blockbuster exhibitions is that their "attendance figures undermine the [deconstructionist] claim that great art is incapable of speaking to everyone."

In *Exhibitionism* I look at how postmodern ideas have undermined our art institutions, including museums, galleries, art schools, college art history departments, and the National Endowment for the Arts. But Hildebrand leapfrogs over much of the book, spending all but a few sentences of her review focusing on the less than one third of *Exhibitionism* that deals with the NEA. It is also disconcerting that, in discussing the endowment, Hildebrand goes on at length about what, in *Exhibitionism*, I tried scrupulously to avoid—rehashing the litany of NEA controversies (Mapplethorpe, Serrano, Finley, et al). *Exhibitionism* contains criticism for those on both sides of the art wars who have fanned the flames of controversy instead of engaging in a serious discussion about what ails our art institutions.

I'll spare your readers a full review of Hildebrand's factual errors, which include her confusion of the NEA's advisory council with its peer panels and her repeated reference to 1966, rather than 1967, as the year when the endowment inaugurated its grant program for visual artists. Suffice it to say that Hildebrand's review describes neither the content nor the tone of *Exhibitionism* with any reasonable degree of accuracy.

LYNNE MUNSON
Boston, MA

MARGARET HILDEBRAND RESPONDS: Munson is right that the NEA's first visual arts grants were awarded in 1967—but *Exhibitionism* studies the process by which the first grantees were chosen, which took place in 1966. My review devotes most attention to the NEA, because, as Munson herself puts it, the NEA "epitomized" the problems in the arts. The NEA essay is also her most interesting. On another note, my review cites Munson's statement that blockbuster museum shows "do serve a civic need—they bring high-quality art to masses of people." Apparently, she believes I ascribe the statement to *Exhibitionism*. I do not. It's from a 1999 article in *The Occasional*. I cited it because it shows she was not always as disparaging of average viewers as she is in *Exhibitionism*.

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the weekly Standard

Competent Conservatives, Reactionary Liberals

We seem to be entering a period of competent conservatism and reactionary liberalism. George W. Bush has put together a cabinet long on management experience and practical skills. But liberal commentators and activists, their imaginations aflame, seem to be caught in a time warp, back in the days when Norman Lear still had hair. They are depicting John Aschroft as if he were George Wallace, Interior nominee Gale Norton as if she were the second coming of James Watt, and Labor nominee Linda Chavez as if she were Phyllis Schlafly with slightly darker skin. We could be in for a series of confrontations in which the two parties don't just hold different views, but live in different centuries.

Bush really has been able to mold an administration in his own image. He is our first president with an MBA, and it's clear that he brings an MBA mentality to the job. There are almost no academics at the top of this administration, but there are plenty of administrators, reflecting a Bush belief that intellectuals are people you can hire; executives are people you can trust. Like Bush, this is a conservative administration, but it is not doctrinaire. It has a chief of staff who supported Hillary Clinton's health care plan, a Treasury secretary who supported higher gas taxes and spurned the supply siders, and a secretary of state who opposed rolling back Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. These are not orthodox conservative positions.

But Bush has been able to achieve something neither his father nor even Ronald Reagan was able to achieve. He has put together a governing conservative team. He and Dick Cheney have skillfully pleased every clique in the GOP class, from the horse country Range Rover drivers who can visit Christie Todd Whitman over at the EPA (Motto: "Making America's Wilderness Safe for Steeplechase") to the pro-life truckers who can park their rigs and visit Tommy Thompson at HHS.

He has also mended an old rift. During the Reagan and Bush years, conservative ideologues battled with Republican pragmatists. The ideologues had great ideas and no clue as to how to game the Washington power structure. The pragmatists were great at playing the system, while lacking principles to guide them. But something has happened to the GOP over the past decade that has been enormously helpful to George Bush. Young people from the ideological wing of the party, like Energy czar Spence Abraham and Labor nominee Linda Chavez, gained administrative experience under Reagan and Bush I. They are much smoother operators than their philosophical predecessors. Meanwhile, the old pragmatists have been Reaganized. Ford hands like Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, and maybe even Paul O'Neill—who must have learned something at all those American Enterprise Institute retreats—have developed conservative convictions to go with their lifelong conservative instincts.

In short, the Republican elite has evolved over the years, and the Bush administration reflects that. Corporate America now includes many more minorities; so does the Bush cabinet. Conservatism has evolved since Newt Gingrich and is now less strident, less libertarian, and less ambitious; the Bush cabinet reflects that too.

So it's all the more amazing that over in the land of the lefties—among the activists and the pundits—you find a set of prejudices that have been preserved in amber for three decades or more. For Jesse Jackson, it will always be Selma. For Anthony Lewis at the *New York Times*, it will always be the ACLU against the forces of McCarthyism. For abortion lobbyist Kate Michelman, it will always be 1973. They really do see a world populated by the stock characters of a decades-old morality play.

As Bush announced his cabinet picks, different groups within the liberal coalition went into well-rehearsed hysterics. The tactics, the mau-mauing, the apocalyptic warnings are all drawn straight from the 1960s, as if we haven't all heard the same ear-piercing cries thousands of times already. John Ashcroft is a racist! Linda Chavez is an enemy of the working class! Gale Norton once worked with James Watt! Civilization is in danger! Send your donations today! All that is missing is for the liberals to roll out Teddy Kennedy to reprise his Robert Bork speech as the grande finale.

The performances say very little about the nominees, but they say a lot about the Democratic party. Al Gore ran on the theme of the People against the Powerful. If that was a message that really had resonance with Democrats, then they'd be attacking the Bush team for all the comfort-

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able corporate fat cats who dominate it. But at heart, that is not what the liberal coalition is about. The Democratic party is as corporate as the GOP, and liberal donors live in posh suburbs like Princeton and Palo Alto. Among voters who describe themselves as members of the upper class, Al Gore won easily.

What the Democratic party is about, as revealed by the screaming of the past few weeks, is two things: affirmative action and abortion. Comfortable corporate nominees breeze through the confirmation process. But oppose affirmative action or legal abortion and you'd better be ready to have your character assassinated. John Ashcroft and Linda Chavez are going to bear the brunt of the calumny this season.

It's probably not going to work. Because not everyone is living in the past. Democratic senators know John Ashcroft. They know he isn't a stock southern sheriff from a Hollywood movie. Paul Wellstone is one of the most liberal members of the Senate. On Christmas Eve he went on CNN and declared, "The ultimate decision is: Is this somebody who is qualified? Is this somebody who you believe is ethical and will work hard? And I think John, you know, can pass that test." Ashcroft has had similar support from Democrats ranging from Russell Feingold to Dianne Feinstein to Robert Torricelli.

The Democratic senators know that most of the charges against Ashcroft are untrue. He didn't oppose the confirmation of Judge Ronnie White because he was black, but because in a few amazing decisions, White seemed unwilling to defend the rights of the victims of crime. They know that Ashcroft voted to confirm almost every black judicial nominee sent up by the Clinton administration. They know that John Ashcroft didn't defend racial profiling, as some of the more enthusiastic liberal pundits are alleging; he convened hearings to expose racial profiling. Those senators will be able to easily verify that the same sorts of smears against Linda Chavez are untrue as well.

Aschroft, Chavez, and company will probably be confirmed because, unlike the activist and pundit wings of their party, most Democratic senators are not living in the past. The larger and more interesting question is how long they will tolerate the archaic tactics and mindsets of those who possess the loudest voices. Surely modern Democratic politicians were horrified by the NAACP's election season James Byrd television ad, which practically accused George W. Bush of murder and which fit the dictionary definition of race baiting. Surely they are embarrassed every time Jesse Jackson starts accusing people of Nazi tactics. Surely they groan at every one of Kate Michelman's fits of fake rage. Surely they know that all this hyperventilating threatens to undo one of Bill Clinton's unquestioned accomplishments. Clinton modernized the image of the Democratic party so that it appealed to mainstream Americans. But parts of the party are in the process of rejecting the implant. The question is when modern Democrats are finally going to speak out against the race baiting and the slander. The confirmation hearings would be a useful place to start.

—David Brooks, for the Editors

Michael Ramirez

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What Clinton Did to the Left

He tamed them—but their animal spirits may be returning. BY DAVID FRUM

"Naderites comfort themselves with the notion that Al Gore will win anyway and that a Green Party vote will push him to the left. And here is where they make their biggest error of all. For how did Clinton and his administration come by their achievements? By the skin of their teeth. Clinton never won 50 percent of the popular vote and was always politically vulnerable because of it."

—Paul Berman, *The New Republic*, Sept. 18, 2000.

"Let's pretend it's the day after the election, and the votes are in. Bush got 49 percent, Gore got 46 percent, and Nader hit the 5-percent jackpot (not gonna happen). Do you really believe the Democrats are going to smack their foreheads and say, 'Oh, my God, let's move to the left and snap up that 5 percent!' Don't be an idiot. The Dems will look at the numbers and say, 'Let's move to the right and try to peel some of that 49 percent off Bush.' If Gore loses the election by less than the percentage Ralph picks up, we'll all be watching the Dems run right, not left."

—Dan Savage, *The Stranger*, Oct. 19, 2000.

Ralph Nader is "under the naive impression that [a Bush victory] will heighten social contradictions and lead to what he has called 'a progressive convulsion'—that is, the worse, the better. This is sectarianism of a familiar sort in the century just past—a sectarianism that has reaped nothing but political catastrophe."

—from an open letter signed by, among others, Benjamin Barber, Todd Gitlin, Toni Morrison, Gloria Steinem, Michael Walzer, and Sean Wilentz, *Salon*, Nov. 6, 2000.

"Careful studies have never been able to identify the so-called silent progressive majority—the Nader voters who otherwise wouldn't make it to the polls."

—Eric Alterman, *The Nation*, Nov. 13, 2000.

BILL CLINTON did something that neither Richard Nixon nor Ronald Reagan ever managed: He convinced the American left that the United States is a conservative country.

For eight years, Clinton steered his party in a rightward direction. Maybe he didn't begin intending to steer that way. Certainly he didn't steer that way all the time. Still and all, you'd have to search pretty hard to find an important national Democrat who today believes that the federal government should regulate oil prices or allocate capital to startup industries, or that domestic industry should be protected from foreign competition, or that welfare is a fundamental constitutional right—all things that Democrats did believe in the 35 years up to 1992.

In years gone by, Democratic presidents who defied liberal orthodoxy in this way provoked insurrection on their left: Harry Truman had his Henry Wallace, Lyndon Johnson had his Eugene McCarthy, and Jimmy Carter had his Ted Kennedy. Yet even as Clinton inked free-trade pacts with Mexico, surrendered to welfare reform, increased the number of federal death-penalty offenses, signed the Defense of Marriage Act, acceded to the Republican capital-gains tax cut—despite a slew of policies almost calculated to give liberals heartburn—the political and intellectual left side of the spectrum stood by its man with the devotion of so many Chicago aldermen. Clinton plucked his renomination without opposition, almost without criticism, and held the Democratic party and its sympathizers in the press virtually unanimously behind him through the deadliest political storm since Watergate.

Now obviously liberals gained things from the Clinton presidency: an unyielding defense of abortion and racial preferences, an expansion of some social welfare provisions, and a grand new health care undertaking—the Children's Health Insurance Program (or CHIP), which encourages states to offer Medicaid to all under-18s—that may someday mature into the large domestic program that otherwise eluded Clinton. On the whole, though, Clinton was to liberalism what Nixon was to conservatism: a leader who demanded much from his supporters and delivered little.

Like Nixon, Clinton was able to hold his supporters in part because he so enraged their enemies. It's hard to avoid feeling that a leader is on your side when he makes the folks on the other side go purple in the face. Like Nixon, too, Clinton benefited from his political weakness. Democrats feared to pressure Clinton to move leftwards lest they erode his shaky political position.

Likewise, Gore's core supporters didn't like it when he criticized the entertainment industry or elevated debt-elimination to first place among his economic priorities or campaigned in Florida's white neighborhoods rather than its minority districts. But what could they do about it? George W. Bush and his terrifying henchmen—Ken Starr, Jesse Helms, Newt Gingrich, Tom DeLay—were pounding on the doors. If they broke in, children all over the United States would have to chew tobacco and go to school barefoot, as they do in Texas. It was more urgent to keep that crew out than to get all fussy about whom one was letting in.

This feeling of weakness on the left explains something otherwise

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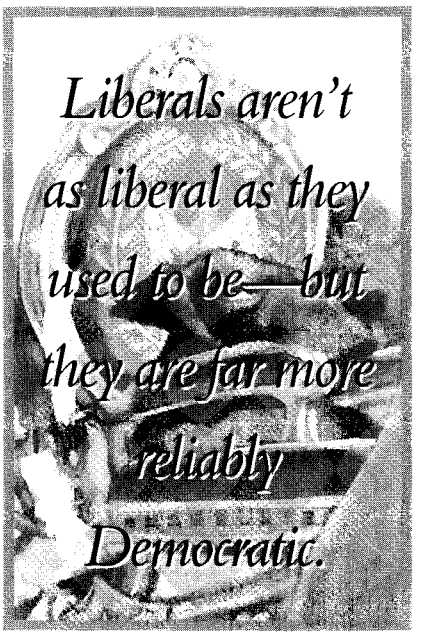
odd about the politics of the 1990s: the simultaneous ebbing of ideological passion and intensification of party feeling. Liberals aren't as liberal as they used to be—but they are far more reliably Democratic. Can anyone imagine a Harvard professor taking to the airwaves on behalf of Lyndon Johnson during the Bobby Baker scandal as avidly as Alan Dershowitz championed Bill Clinton during the year of Monica? Or a leftie as zealous as Sidney Blumenthal signing up to swap conspiracy theories with Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter? For that matter, does anyone remember John Anderson suffering anything like the hail of abuse from liberals that Ralph Nader took? (The same *New Republic* that sneered at the ludicrous pretension of the Nader campaign actually endorsed John Anderson in 1980.)

But how long will this pragmatic mood last? Has the liberal wing of the Democratic party after all these years at last been converted to lesser-evilism for keeps? Did Clinton euthanize his party's left—or merely anesthetize it? It would be foolish to give any assured answer. But there are some reasons for thinking that the discipline maintained against the Nader temptation will not last:

(1) The fact that the combined Gore-Nader vote amounted to 52 percent of the ballots cast dispels much of the feeling of weakness that sustained Clinton. You can already hear bolder voices speculating that a new Democratic majority coalition may be aborning—and that spirit of confidence may embolden liberals to new political adventures.

(2) The willingness of Democratic liberals to tolerate the hands-off economic policies of the post-1994 Clinton administration will not necessarily translate into a willingness to tolerate similar policies from a Republican administration. Benjamin Disraeli quipped that it is the duty of an opposition to oppose. It's also a psychological necessity. And to explain and justify that opposition, Democrats in Congress will be tempted to resurrect the interventionist ideas that they put aside during the Clinton administration.

(3) The politics of the Clinton years were cushioned by the great puffy heaps of money strewn about by the prosperity of the 1990s. It was hard to muster much ire against welfare reform when $7 an hour jobs were going begging. It sounded silly to call for protection against foreign competition when American factories were working at capacity. And with colossal budget surpluses lubricating the work of Congress, the clash of interests tapered off to a gentle scraping. But that prosperity seems, if not to be ending altogether, then certainly diminishing.



(4) One of the reasons that the pre-Clinton Democratic party had such difficulty adopting moderate policies was that it had such immoderate beliefs. The 36-day recount battle exposed how strongly wild and paranoid beliefs still pulse inside the party. Party supporters are willing to describe a seatbelt checkpoint as the functional equivalent of a poll tax and the malfunctioning of a voting machine as the moral equivalent of Bull Connor's dogs—and the party's leaders let such talk go unrebuked because they half-believe it themselves. When people's vision of the world is this distorted, it is as difficult for them to stick to the policies of a Robert Rubin as it is for a man who hears voices in his head to carry on a normal conversation. The madness on the inside must sooner or later affect the behavior on the outside.

(5) Finally, there's the malign presence of Bill Clinton himself. Clinton is the first ex-president since Theodore Roosevelt to be simultaneously popular, vigorous, and ambitious. Clinton probably possesses even more power than Roosevelt did, because TR's ability to meddle in politics was constrained by his party's weariness of him despite the public's affection for him. It was in President Clinton's interest to prod his party toward the center on economic issues at least. But ex-president Clinton? He will be governed by very different imperatives, not least the very Clintonian desire to see his replacements stumble and fail.

What would a revived Democratic left look like? The country has changed a lot since 1988. Foreign affairs has receded to the point of vanishing from politics. Private-sector unions count for little if anything. Gays are replacing Jews as liberalism's most important source of money. More significantly, American society has evolved in ways that give people on the left less cause to feel culturally alienated: They may still hate the American past, but it is probably less and less accurate to describe them as "anti-American" in the present tense. They have largely remade America, and they are naturally pleased with their handiwork.

But the eternal issues remain: freedom vs. statism, old moral codes vs. new ones, self-government vs. the rule of experts. Those issues divided the country—though often in very unfamiliar and surprising forms—through the Clinton years. They will continue to divide it in the future. Of course, the Democrats will be on the wrong side of all those issues. How wrong? That's the question that the fate of the party's left will answer. ♦

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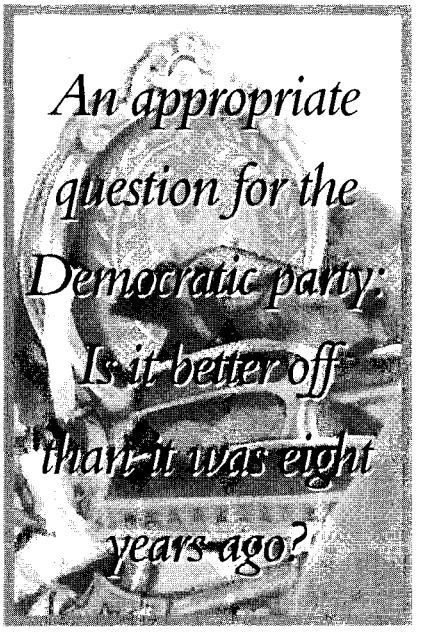
What Clinton Did to the Democrats

Nothing good. BY FRED BARNES

YOU'VE HEARD IT many times and you'll hear it many more: Whatever his flaws, President Clinton is indisputably the greatest political talent of his generation. This accolade is a common theme of media obituaries on his presidency. "Even his sharpest critics bow to his mastery of politics," said John Harris of the *Washington Post*. David Halberstam, writing in *Vanity Fair*, declared Clinton "the most gifted politician of the modern era." Robin Toner of the *New York Times* insisted he "transformed the political world." And Joe Klein, who skewered Clinton in his bestselling novel *Primary Colors*, is now in awe. "Clinton never faced a policy crisis significant enough to challenge his political gifts," he wrote in the *New Yorker*. In other words, Clinton was too talented for his time.

It's true. Clinton has a knack for politics, but only in the most cramped sense of what constitutes politics. He's so charming even political enemies find him likable. He's a good speaker, especially when extemporizing, and a trenchant debater. He's enormously appealing when addressing crowds, small groups, or a single person. Clinton is very clever and particularly adept at tactical moves that thwart his opponents, usually Republicans. A good example: concocting reasons like saving Social Security or paying down the debt to block GOP tax cuts. He's at his best in a fight, playing off foes skillfully and turning them into figures of scorn. Just ask Newt Gingrich.

But there's a lot more to politics than personality and stratagems. Great politicians not only survive in office, they achieve great things, build their party, and leave an enduring and positive legacy. Clinton managed only to survive. Years ago, Sidney Hook made a distinction between eventful and event-making leaders. Eventful presidents have little influence on important events that occur during their term. Event-making presidents produce far-reaching changes that wouldn't have happened without them. Ronald Reagan was an event-making president. Clinton is eventful.



The Clinton era was marked by four major developments in Washington: the failure of his health care plan, enactment of welfare reform, arrival of a balanced budget, and impeachment. Not one of these was sought by Clinton—quite the opposite. A wiser politician would not have turned his most significant domestic initiative, national health care, over to his wife. Nor would he have spurned reasonable compromises offered by leading Republicans. Clinton wound up with nothing. Now, he claims it was impossible, given the circumstances, for national health care to have won approval by Congress (then controlled by Democrats). Shouldn't a politician with his supposed gifts have sensed that at the time?

Clinton brags about welfare reform and a balanced budget. But he had little to do with either. Sure, he talked about ending welfare "as we know it." The bill written by Republicans, terminating the welfare entitlement altogether, was far from what he envisioned, however. He signed it reluctantly and only after political adviser Dick Morris warned he'd lose the 1996 election if he didn't. He and his aides vehemently opposed a balanced budget—until pressure by congressional Republicans made that position untenable. So, as with welfare reform, Clinton acquiesced. And impeachment? Clinton says it's a badge of honor, not a stain. Right. In any case, he didn't seek it.

Another test of a great politician is whether he seizes opportunities. Again, Clinton failed. He blew the chance to reform Social Security and Medicare and make them solvent through the middle of the twenty-first century. Naturally, Clinton has excuses. Insolvency wasn't imminent. Congressional Democrats didn't want to go along, and impeachment made him beholden to their wishes. But would a politician without peer have gotten into that situation? The truth is Clinton didn't have the moxie to persuade even a few dozen Democrats to back entitlement reform. He didn't set up a war room at the White House to cadge for votes, as he had for NAFTA in 1993. He simply gave up, leaving the problem for George W. Bush.

I don't want to sell Clinton short. He was extremely good at frustrating Republicans after they took control

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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of Congress in 1994. He won the budget battle with Gingrich in 1995, but to what end other than making himself look good? By 1997, he'd accepted most of the cuts in Medicare that he'd earlier denounced and agreed to significant tax cuts as well. Michael Waldman, Clinton's chief speechwriter, told Joe Klein that "the most incredible moment" of Clinton's presidency occurred in his State of the Union address in January 1998 when he proclaimed the budget surplus should be used to "save Social Security first." This flummoxed Republicans and bulldozed their plans for deeper tax cuts. But Clinton didn't follow up by actually saving Social Security. His only step was to endorse a Republican idea, a hobby horse of GOP senator Phil Gramm of Texas, to make the Social Security surplus off-limits to spending programs or tax cuts.

As for the Democratic party, here's an appropriate question: Is it better off than it was eight years ago? According to Robin Toner, "Mr. Clinton restored the Democrats' national stature." I'm not so sure. Clinton didn't win a majority in either of his presidential races and his anointed successor, Al Gore, didn't either. And, as columnist Mark Shields pointed out in the *Washington Post*, Clinton's victories were accompanied by massive Democratic losses. In 1992, for example, Democrats had 102 more House seats than Republicans; now they have 11 fewer. In 1992, Democrats had governors in 28 states, including New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Florida, and controlled 25 state legislatures to 8 for Republicans. By 2000, Democrats held only 18 governorships, and Republicans controlled one more legislature than Democrats (17 to 16).

Another pro-Clinton claim is that he dragged Democrats to the political center, where their prospects are now bright. True, he made intermittent stabs at this. But it worked only on a handful of economic issues and not at all on the cultural, social, and religious issues that were critical in the 2000 presidential election. Among Democrats, gay rights, racial preferences, gun control, and abortion have become litmus test issues. And Democrats come across as secular and culturally permissive, allowing Republicans to capitalize on their religious faith and cultural conservatism. This last contrast gave Bush enough southern and border states to win.

Clinton does have a legacy, but it's not the one he's gabbed about in recent interviews. He told *Esquire* he helped "prepare America for the whole new way of living that the Information Age is bringing" and made "the connection of what we do in Washington to how people live . . . closer than it has ever been." That's the kind of vague stuff you talk about when there's not much to boast about. Clinton, of course, says his 1993 budget produced the economic boom. But the economy was growing at 5-plus percent when he took office, and the stock market didn't explode until Republicans won Congress.

Clinton's real legacy is scandal, from Whitewater to Monicagate. Next is the total politicization of the White House. In assessing Clinton in the *Washington Post Magazine*, Harris wrote he "mastered the office of the presidency as thoroughly as any occupant since Franklin D. Roosevelt." There's some truth in that. Clinton institutionalized robotic spin by White House aides. He transformed the press secretary into a political point man. He made demonization of political foes routine. Given this, it's small wonder Clinton aroused fierce and undying opposition and is leaving on a sour, whiny note. In interviews, he embraces victimhood, an unattractive posture for a president or any other politician. He told *Esquire* Republicans should apologize for impeaching him. They responded last week by giving Mr. Impeachment, Rep. Henry Hyde, a shiny new chairmanship. Not exactly "bowing before his mastery of politics." ♦

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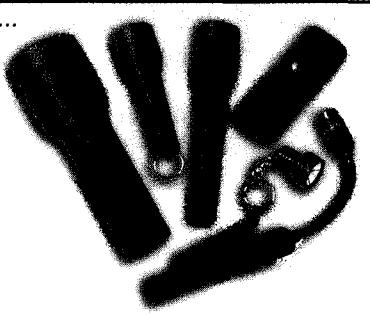

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Ashcroft in the Crosshairs

The Borking machine is trained on a new target.

BY MATTHEW REES

THEY'RE BACK. Like geese that instinctively fly south for the winter, liberal lobbyists are coming out of an eight-year hibernation just as a Republican is set to move into 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Hardly heard from since the jihad against Clarence Thomas, these activists have begun whining about cabinet nominees like Linda Chavez, Gale Norton, and Tommy Thompson. But most of their ire, encouraged by a sympathetic media, has been directed at one person: attorney general-designate John Ashcroft.

Mainstream enough to have once been elected head of the National Governors Association, Ashcroft is now being caricatured as a racist who can't be trusted to carry out the attorney general's chief responsibility: enforce the nation's laws. "This nomination," thunders Ralph Neas of People for the American Way, "is an insult to every person who is committed to our nation's promise of equal justice for all."

There's no denying that Ashcroft, like George W. Bush, is a conservative. And while it's true he's the son of a Pentecostal minister, his views were sufficiently palatable to Missouri's middle-of-the-road voters that they elected him statewide five times (his defeat in November followed the death in a plane crash of his opponent, Mel Carnahan, shortly before Election Day). Indeed, having been a U.S. senator, a two-term governor, and a two-term attorney general of his home state, Ashcroft, a graduate of the University of Chicago's law school, is more qualified to lead the Justice Department than any nominee in modern memory. Yet because he has a long record of opposition to liberalism's holy trinity—abortion, gun control, and government-mandated racial preferences—he's been deemed unacceptable by the liberal commissars.

Senator Patrick Leahy, for example, the Judiciary Committee's senior Democrat, has asked how Ashcroft would respond to violence at a Planned Parenthood clinic, implying, without evidence, that he might go easy on the perpetrators. But a number of Democratic senators have refused to join in this vilification. Indeed, one who just left the Senate, Pat Moynihan, says Ashcroft "will be a superb attorney general."

But even if Ashcroft is confirmed, liberal activists think that waging a fight against him will pay future dividends. They believe if they make enough of a stink about Ashcroft, Bush might emerge spooked, and less willing to nominate strong conservatives to the Supreme Court and the federal bench generally or to pursue conservative policies.

There's one other factor at work. "This is an opportunity for liberal advocacy groups to galvanize their base," says Clint Bolick of the libertarian Institute for Justice. "John Ashcroft will be good for their fundraising."

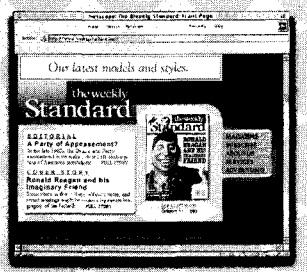
If the liberal direct-mail types strike it rich off Ashcroft—Jesse Helms just doesn't sell like he used to—they'll be indebted to pundits and the press. For in the three weeks since Ashcroft was picked, a remarkable caricature of him has emerged, one-sided and embellished with outright fabrications.

Routinely, Ashcroft is cast as a racist. No articles have mentioned that he signed Missouri's first hate-crimes law, way back in 1988. And few mention that his wife teaches law at a black university in Washington, D.C., or that he supported 26 of the 28 blacks nominated for the judiciary by the Clinton administration.

As for other examples of distorted coverage of Ashcroft, consider the following:

¶ A front-page *Washington Post* editorial masquerading as an article charged Ashcroft with "bare-knuckled opportunism" in his successful effort to prevent the Senate confirmation of a state supreme court judge nominated for a federal judgeship. The piece chastised Ashcroft for distributing information about the judge to law-enforcement groups in Missouri, as if that somehow violated

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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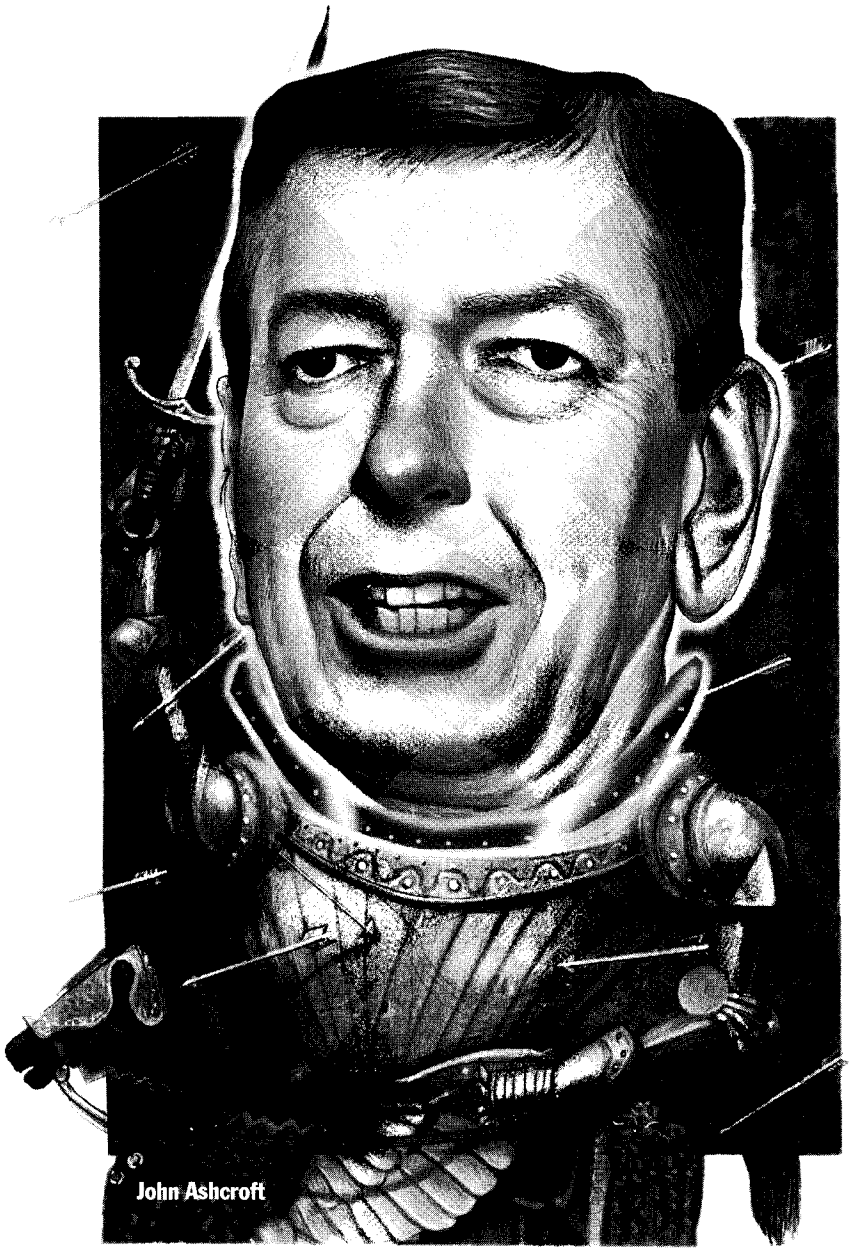
John Ashcroft

Earl Keleny

Senate procedure (it didn't). And the writer betrayed his ignorance by describing Ashcroft as "best known as the Senate sponsor of a ban on late-term abortions." This will be news to Rick Santorum, whom any casual observer of Capitol Hill would recognize as the Senate's most active opponent of partial-birth abortion.

¶ A *Newsweek* article described Ashcroft as supporting an anti-abortion constitutional amendment "that reached well beyond the agenda of most pro-life groups: eliminating exceptions for rape and incest." In fact, no serious organization dedicated to outlawing abortion favors the rape/incest exception.

¶ A *Salon* article about Ashcroft's comments in a Southern cultural journal hinted that his sympathies were suspect, as his home state of Missouri "has a history of coziness with the Confederates."

¶ Syndicated columnist William Raspberry wrote that Ashcroft "opposed legislation to allow the gathering of racial statistics on traffic stops." Wrong. No legislation was ever voted on, and the Senate subcommittee Ashcroft chaired devoted a hearing to the subject, where he expressed *support* for such legislation.

¶ In an appearance on the Fox News Channel, Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor of the *Nation*, spoke darkly of "allegations" that Ashcroft was "one of the only senators" who opposed legislation proposing to give Holocaust victims reparations. This was a nice try to tar Ashcroft with the anti-Semitic brush, but he did no such thing.

¶ Numerous articles have repeated the charge that Ronnie White, the Missouri supreme court judge Ashcroft opposed for a federal judgeship, dissented in death penalty cases with the same frequency as Ashcroft's five appointees to the same court. Not quite. White dissented in 11.8 percent of such cases, while none of Ashcroft's appointees dissented in more than 2.6 percent of the cases.

The White matter has become the pièce de résistance for those dedicated to sinking Ashcroft. (Nan Aron of the Alliance for Justice hysterically called Ashcroft's activity a "hate crime" carried out for "political gain.") Overlooked has been that Ashcroft was not alone in his opposition. Senate Republicans are a diverse lot, with moderates like Olympia Snowe of Maine and Jim Jeffords of Vermont breaking ranks almost daily. Yet every GOP senator voted against confirming White, suggesting Ashcroft had a persuasive case against him.

The ferocity of the anti-Ashcroft campaign notwithstanding, it's highly unlikely the Senate will vote down his nomination. A simple majority is all that's needed for confirmation, and no Republicans have indicated a willingness to oppose him (Susan Collins, another Maine moderate, went public with her support last week). And a number of Democrats have made soothing noises, including liberals like Russ Feingold and Paul Wellstone and moderates like John Breaux and Bob Torricelli. Ashcroft could also win the support of Joe Lieberman, his college classmate at Yale, who is said to be eager to renew his moderate credentials.

The only way Ashcroft could get knocked out would be for some personal scandal to erupt. That's unlikely. Not only does he not drink or smoke, he doesn't even dance. Now *that's* conservative. ♦

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Nostradamus vs. Bush

The president-elect's critics make fools of themselves. BY JOHN PODHORETZ

A WEBSITE CALLED *esoterism.com*, which is dedicated to "bringing to everybody the understanding of Nostradamus's writings," currently features a "last-minute" bulletin. "Following Quatrain is a HOAX," the bulletin declares, "and is not from Nostradamus: 'Come the millennium, month 12, / In the home of greatest power, / The village idiot will come forth / To be acclaimed the leader.'"

In the past month, e-mails featuring this quotation have circumnavigated the virtual globe with blinding speed. I've received 14 of them, all from the various pro-Democrat and pro-Gore correspondents who added me to their e-mail address books at some point this year, and who are wracked with glee at this supposedly supernatural divination of the rise of George W. Bush to the presidency of the United States by a 16th century French crackpot.

Michel Nostradamus is given dubious credit by his followers for predicting the rise of Napoleon, Hitler, and Muammar Qaddafi through garbled bits of gibberish like this one: "Nocturnal combat the valiant captain, / vanquished will flee, few people overthrown; / His people stirred up, sedition not in vain, / Then his own son will hold him beseiged." What does this mean? Well, according to Nostradamus's contemporary interpreter, John Hogue, "Given the sad fact that the last 440 years have hosted over a thousand wars with night battles too numerous to count, this incident could fit any number of them."

Oh.

The Nostradamus-Bush hoax has made it into print—and not in the *National Enquirer* but in the pages of the *New Republic* and the *New York Times*. In both places, the likelihood of the quatrain's falsity is noted, but the writers quote it anyway, just to stick it in Dubya's eye. Here's the *New Republic*'s Martin Peretz, still in the "anger" stage of his mourning over Al Gore's defeat: "Neither my son Jesse nor I put much stock in the prophecies of Nostradamus. Especially when Nostradamus's 'prophecies' come from the Web, which has a tendency to manufacture quotes for occasions like these. But I'll share the 'quotation' from the medieval prognosticator that Jesse e-mailed me anyway, because, whoever penned them, the words couldn't be more true, or more sad . . ."

In one of her groaningly labored efforts to write funny, Gail Collins of the *New York Times* made the fake quatrain the center of her year-end piece: "That looks at first glance like an impolite jab at George W. But I actually suspect Team Bush of composing it—the jokes about its guy's IQ have pushed the bar so low that the president-elect now gets kudos every time he brushes his teeth."

Another dozen media outlets credulously reported the quatrain, with heavy-handed yukking all around. You would think a group of people who have told each other the same joke for 50 years now would get tired of it—but just as conservatives never tire of being told how power-mad liberals are, liberals never tire of being told how stupid Republicans are.

Bush the Village Idiot follows in a long line of liberal assaults on the supposed stupidity of Republican politicians. Dwight David Eisenhower, who only ran World War II, was clueless. Ronald Reagan was characterized as evil until that message didn't seem to play with the American people, whereupon he became a moron. George Bush the Elder was considered stupid until Dan Quayle came along to play his president's Stan Laurel. And now Dubya is the Fool of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

The president-elect once said people chronically "misunderestimated" him. His use of that solecism is enough to make you think he's doing it on purpose—because it's true that he is underestimated, and it's also true that he's underestimated because he speaks English like he's translating it in his head from the original Dutch.

Certainly nothing in his behavior this past year prepared anyone for the masterful and commanding way he has selected his cabinet, pulling off surprise after surprise (Don Rumsfeld? Rod Paige? Gale Norton?) and creating so much liberal outrage that Democratic constituent groups will have a hard time coalescing around an effort to defeat just one.

And his decision to use strong language to describe the current economic uncertainty, despite gasps of surprise and outrage from the Paul Krugmans of the world, has been vindicated by the Fed's decision to cut interest rates—which means that Alan Greenspan and Bush see eye to eye or that Bush has so frightened Greenspan with the possibility of getting through a gigantic tax cut of which the Fed chairman disapproves that he is doing anything he can to get the economy moving. Either way, Bush has stepped onto the Washington stage with surer footing, conviction, and success than anyone—liberal or conservative—was predicting on the night Al Gore finally conceded.

George W. Bush is no village idiot. But he is already making useful idiots of those who think he is. ♦

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What Clinton Did to the Economy

Surpisingly little harm. BY IRWIN M. STELZER

BILL CLINTON came to Washington riding the early stages of a recovery from a mild recession, and he leaves at what appears to be the end of the phenomenal era of economic growth that characterized his eight years in office, during which the real net worth of American households increased by upwards of $10 trillion.

It would seem to any Clinton partisan only fair to conclude that the man who promised to focus on the economy brought prosperity with him, and that the prospect of his departure has so unsettled financial markets that this period of sustained growth is now ending. After all, the president did resist the wilder of the tax-and-spend members of his party; he gave Treasury secretary Robert Rubin a free hand in containing a series of financial crises that might have put enormous pressures on the banking system; he did end the welfare system as we knew it and fight important constituents of the Democratic party to push through NAFTA and other trade-opening agreements. All this surely contributed to the nation's prosperity. (Plus, Mrs. Clinton once and for all put paid to any arguments from the left that commodity speculators are evildoers, rather than agents who are justly rewarded for helping to keep demand and supply in balance by buying low and selling high!)

The president's enemies take a different line. The prosperity that marked Bill Clinton's terms in office was put in place by the tax and other reforms engineered by Ronald Reagan and (conservatives peel off at this point) by George Bush's courageous willingness to eat his "read my lips" pledge so as to tame the budget deficit. The conversion of record deficits into record surpluses is owed to economic growth that came from Silicon Valley, not Pennsylvania Avenue; to spending restraints imposed on the president by Republicans in Congress; and to the peace dividend resulting from President Reagan's success in toppling "the evil empire." Add a brilliant performance by Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan to the mix, and you have a record period of economic growth that occurred in spite of Clinton's overt and covert tax increases.

That era is coming to an end, say Clinton's critics, partly because the president allowed the antitrust division of his Justice Department to threaten that engine of technological change and innovation, Microsoft. Throw in his refusal to cut taxes that now account for a record share of national income, and his recent squandering of the projected-but-not-yet-earned surplus on new programs that will become increasingly costly, and you have a prescription for slowdown if not recession.

I leave it to historians to decide who will have the best of this debate, which has at its core a major misconception—that it is the actions of the president that determine the course of the American economy. In appraising the economic consequences of the Clinton presidency, or indeed of any presidency, we must start with the fact that the power of the White House to influence the economy is limited—and not only by the need to secure the acquiescence of Congress. Indeed, the power of the Federal Reserve is also less than many people believe. Both Clinton and Greenspan held office during the phenomenal rise of the Nasdaq—and during its recent plunge. To blame them for the fall would be to give them credit for the rise. Obviously, other forces are at work (the argument that Greenspan is responsible for this roller coaster by keeping interest rates too low for too long, and then raising them by too much for too long is one that I leave to economists who think that they can separate the effect of interest rates from other factors affecting economic performance). A president can push through a tax cut, but he can't force consumers to spend the increased disposable income, and they won't if they fear for their economic futures. And a Fed chairman, with the support of his board, can reduce interest rates, but he can't force businessmen to invest—and they won't if they see the returns from such investments as inadequate to compensate them for the risks they are taking.

That is not to say that the president is powerless to influence the economy. But it is to say that his power may be more to interfere with economic growth than to stimulate it. A laconic and inactive Calvin Coolidge presided over a period of enormous and prolonged prosperity; an interventionist FDR needed a war to help him end large-scale unemployment; Nixon's restlessness led him to impose price controls that contributed to two consecutive years of negative growth; and a hyperactive Jimmy Carter introduced America to the concept of stagflation, with a combination of regulations, hair-shirt pessimism, and mistaken policy reactions to an oil embargo.

By the very modest standard known to physicians as "first, do no harm," the Clinton presidency must be regarded as an economic success: At the very least, fairness compels even his critics to acknowledge that Bill Clinton did nothing to interfere with the growth of the economy during his eight years in the White House. Bill Clinton can reasonably claim credit for following the old conservative adage, "Don't just do something, stand there." If he was not responsible for the turnabout in the nation's budgetary fortunes, he did

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nothing to prevent it; if he does not deserve credit for the spasm of innovation associated with the Internet, he certainly deserves credit for not interfering with it by taxation or mistaken policies on intellectual property; if he cannot claim credit for the benign inflation picture, neither did he interfere with the Fed or with international money markets that helped keep interest rates up and the dollar strong; if he cannot claim credit for the surge in stock prices that has recently ended, he at least allowed wealth accumulation to become respectable by avoiding demagogic attacks on "malefactors of great wealth." By doing little, he seems to have done much.

Indeed, one can go further and say that Clinton did many things that contributed to the longest and greatest period of wealth creation the nation has ever seen. Free trade, as any economist will tell you, increases the prosperity of both importing and exporting countries. But it does have distributional consequences. In America, free trade shifts income from producers to consumers, from those who once made sneakers in this country to those who now buy the sneakers produced more efficiently overseas. And the T-shirts. And the cars. Good news for consumers, many of whom don't realize that they are the beneficiaries of NAFTA and similar agreements; bad news for some workers, who know darned well that they are the casualties of a free trade regime.

It is these casualties who form the core of an important constituency of the Democratic party. And it is they and their congressional allies whom Bill Clinton took on in a battle that he well knew would win him few friends and gain him many enemies. Put that courageous fight in the president's plus column.

Then there is welfare reform. As economies grow, an important constraint is the size of the work force. Welfare reform, with its greater emphasis on work requirements, forced many who previously were not in the market for jobs to find them, easing the labor supply shortage and the upward pressure on wages. True, welfare reform was in some sense thrust upon the president by congressional Republicans. But in the end he went along, to the pain of many of his core supporters (including a key member of his household), thereby contributing to the sustainability of the economic expansion by augmenting the labor force.

That's the good news. The not-so-good news is that the Clinton era saw the hatching of several chickens that are going to come home to roost in the Bush White House. There are, first, the twin imbalances that trouble Bush's top economic adviser Larry Lindsey: the savings deficit and the trade deficit. Americans have been spending as much as, and sometimes more than they earn, counting on rising house and stock prices to add to the asset side of their balance sheets. The nation as a whole has been spending more abroad than it is earning there, paying for this import spree by sending dollars abroad to foreigners who use them to buy shares in U.S. companies—or entire companies.

Now that stock prices have headed south—a direction many investors

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and traders have never heard of—and consumers have accumulated rather high credit card and other debt, these imbalances may no longer be sustainable. Falling stock prices may cause consumers to rein in spending, and overseas investors to dump dollar assets as they hunt for greener pastures. In short, the party may be over, and the check is being presented to someone who wasn't even there.

Another problem that Clinton will be leaving behind is the risk to both economic growth and foreign policy independence created by the resurgence of the OPEC oil cartel. His administration watched Mexico breathe life into OPEC by arranging an alliance between Venezuela's new president, a Castro-sound-alike, and the Saudi royal family. And did nothing to persuade Kuwait that pulling Uncle Sam's beard might turn out to be as bad an idea as pulling on Superman's cape. The result has been a huge de facto tax on American consumers just as the economy is slowing. And of course Arab oil-producing nations once again have a tool to influence this country's Middle Eastern policy.

Less immediately obvious is the cost of the regulations Clinton has imposed by executive order in the waning days of his administration. Abandoning the do-very-little attitude that characterized his administration for its first seven years and nine months, the president has emulated Jimmy Carter and added 29,000 pages of new regulations to the Federal Register by a stroke—several strokes, actually—of the executive pen in the last 90 days in which it has been his to wield. There are new regulations on smoke and soot pollution that will weigh heavily on manufacturers; new "ergonomic" rules aimed at repetitive stress disorders that will bedevil the office-based service industries; even new restrictions on fishing and a set-aside of huge tracts of land and sea to prevent their development. Bush might persuade Congress to reverse these and other measures, but the even balance of the Congress and the press of other matters makes that unlikely.

Finally, there are those twin testimonials to Clintonian short-termism. The president is justly famous for ignoring the long-term consequences of consuming Big Macs in pursuit of the short-term pleasure of their consumption. So, too, with Social Security and Medicare: The long-term consequences of a pay-as-you-go Social Security system and a method of health care financing that cannot possibly cope with changing demography and medical technology have both been ignored. Clinton had an opportunity to defuse both of these ticking time bombs; instead, he chose partisan attacks on anyone willing to question the sustainability of these benefit programs.

So George W. Bush may not have much to thank him for in the years ahead, but as Bill Clinton rides off into Sunset Boulevard, he will no doubt be exceedingly pleased with himself. It was a mixed record—a combination of creative inaction and inadvisable action—but not bad for the first Democratic president since Jimmy Carter brought the economy to its knees. ♦

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JWR

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War Through Weakness

Barak's policies have increased the chances of conflict in the Middle East. BY TOM ROSE

Jerusalem

WITH HIS reelection prospects faltering, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak is employing a political tactic familiar in the annals of doomed campaigns. By charging that his conservative opponent, Ariel Sharon, will "lead the country into war," Barak is trying to scare an increasingly disgusted Israeli public.

Unlike Jimmy Carter, who tried this against Ronald Reagan in 1980, Barak isn't necessarily wrong in predicting that war will accompany a Sharon victory. He's just blaming the wrong person. After all, it isn't Sharon who has accelerated the most dangerous deterioration of regional security in a generation. It is Barak himself.

But to admit as much, even at this late hour, would be to concede what even many committed peaceniks in Israel now understand: The Oslo peace process not only failed to bring peace, it has hurtled the region into escalating danger.

Almost all strategic analysts here agree that the risk of war is greater now than it has been since 1973. Just last week, the Israeli Defense Force was instructed to prepare for action. Reservists are being put on notice, and field equipment is being readied for use. Attacks on Israel's northern border by Syrian and Iranian backed Hezbollah guerrillas are testing Israel's resolve. Iran has threatened to attack Israel with ballistic missiles containing non-conventional warheads if Israel responds. Iraq has likewise threatened ballistic missile strikes in addition to moving two mechanized divisions toward the Jordanian border.

What happened? How did a process that was supposed to bring peace, cooperation, and development to the region instead lay the groundwork for war? Oslo lulled Israelis into believing that their neighbors had changed and that a series of one-sided concessions would consolidate the change. Instead, concessions only increased Arab appetites.

From the earliest days of Zionist settlement through that famous handshake on the White House lawn, Israel had followed a strategy whose guiding principle was deterrence. By continually asserting its right to defend itself with whatever means it deemed necessary, Israel had earned grudging respect, if not acceptance, from its neighbors, and life in the region had settled into a recognized pattern. While Arab rhetoric changed little, the actions of Arab leaders changed a great deal. By the early 1990s, most Arab states had given up conspiring to destroy Israel by force. They knew that attempts to harm the Jewish state would be mightily repelled. At the time the Oslo accords were signed, in 1993, the Middle East seemed further from war than it had since Israel's founding.

Oslo started to change that. By conceding territory to Yasser Arafat, Israel seemed to concede the premise that the source of conflict in the Middle East was its military victory in 1967. The Israelis were largely delighted at the prospect of ceasing to occupy a hostile population, but their withdrawal from territories they had captured in defensive wars gave the Arabs their first taste of victory since 1948.

An increasing number of Israelis believed that the Arabs' rising expectations could be kept in check so long as no concessions made went unreciprocated. In fact, in one of Oslo's many ironies, the three-year tenure of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister brought enough equilibrium to the process that even right-wing skeptics began to believe the process could work. The accord's most articulate critic was starting to make it work.

But Netanyahu's defeat in 1999 allowed his successor, former Army general Ehud Barak, to turn Netanyahu's hard-headed concessions into a flood of unprecedented offers. By proclaiming his intention to reach a comprehensive settlement with the Palestinians within 15 months of taking office, Barak shifted all the pressure from Arafat onto himself. He also conveyed a sense of Israeli desperation to an increasingly confident Arab public. Up to that point, Israel's policy had been to wait the Arabs out. While not terribly satisfying, this had worked well.

In May 2000, Barak unilaterally withdrew Israel's troops from its security zone in southern Lebanon. This telegraphed to the Arab world that Israel could be forced to retreat. At the very time he was trying to increase pressure on the Palestinians to settle the conflict completely and permanently, Barak fatally undermined his own effort by showing them that they really didn't need to make any concessions. All Arafat had to do was do what he has always done best: kill Jews.

Why should Arafat concede what a band of Iranian-trained and Syrian-funded Hezbollah guerrillas did not? Rather than punish Arafat for launching a terrorist war against Israel in September, Israel rewarded the PLO leader with still more concessions. In three months last fall, Barak dismantled a deterrent policy fifty years in the making.

Because it is now clear that the Palestinians have no intention of reasonably settling their conflict with Israel, one can only ask what possible alternatives to war are left? How can

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Israel continue Barak's policy of tolerating the existence of a 40,000-man terrorist army increasingly successful in its objective of creating mayhem and panic in Israel? When Israel is finally forced to confront this army, what will the Arab world's reaction be?

And after encouraging Arafat for so long, can even moderate Arab states like Egypt and Jordan stay out of a regional conflict? Arafat has always sought to draw Israel and the Arab world into a war on his behalf in the belief that this war would lead to an internationally imposed solution rewarding the Palestinians at Israel's expense. By continuing to attack Israeli civilians, Arafat is all but begging Israel to do what at some point it must: attack him.

And when Israel does take action, can it allow Syria to exploit the situation by using its Hezbollah proxies to attack northern Israel with rockets and terrorist infiltrations? Won't Israel have to respond even though Iran and Iraq have both threatened war?

Barak's offer to cede Jerusalem's Temple Mount (Judaism's holiest site) to Palestinian control may have pushed the region past the point of no return. Never before had even the most rejectionist Arab leader dreamed that any Israeli would agree to concessions in Jerusalem, let alone offer up the Jewish people's heart and soul. Barak made this offer at the very time Israeli buses were being blown up and Israeli civilians murdered on their roads. Never before had Israel appeared so weak and on the run.

Thus has the government of Israel stoked an Arab frenzy of expectation and awakened fear and fury in Israeli hearts. It is for this reason alone that Ariel Sharon—perhaps Israel's least attractive political candidate, a man reviled in the Arab world and despised on the Israeli left and in the salons of Europe as "Israel's Milosevic"—holds a staggering 30-point lead in the polls over Ehud Barak.

Like it or not, Sharon is the only Israeli left whom Arabs fear. He may now be the only one whose election can deter a conflagration. ♦

President Abraham Lincoln
by Nano Lopez

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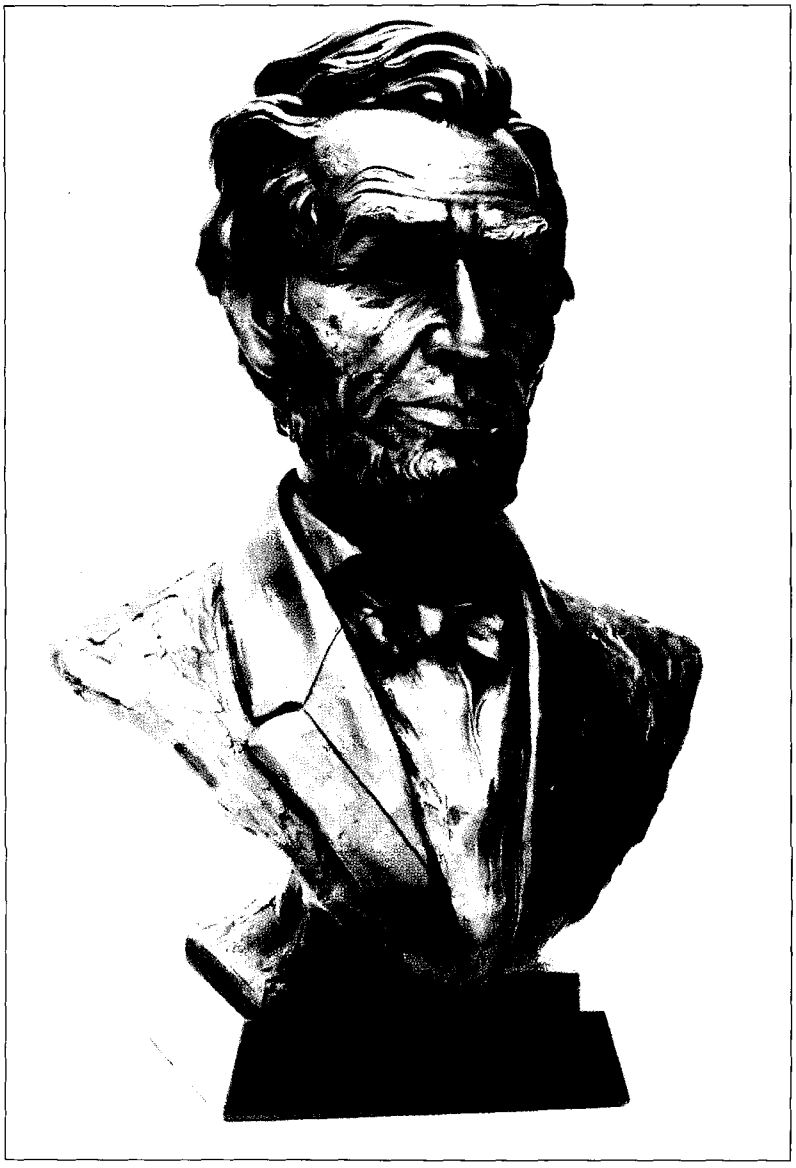

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves and with all nations."

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Mr. Bush, Tear Down This Roadblock

What better way to mark the passing of the Clinton administration than to reopen Pennsylvania Avenue?

By Andrew Ferguson

"Kings live in park enclaves," Thomas Jefferson said, in one of his Jeffersonian moods, "presidents live on streets." Not nowadays. Nowadays the American president lives in a very nice house on a two-block stretch of abandoned roadway in downtown Washington, D.C., with imposing concrete blockades disguised as planters at either end. In between is a spread of pavement that used to form part of Pennsylvania Avenue, bordered to the south by the White House and to the north by Lafayette Park. It's a shadeless expanse roamed by weary tourists, anti-nuclear fetishists, homeless drunks, harried pedestrians, roller-blading exhibitionists, and skateboarding truants—a mosaic of city life "rich" and "vibrant" enough to delight the most hardened New Urbanist and leave the rest of us unmoved. Kings, what few remain, may live in park enclaves, but in the new millennium the American president lives on the edge of a roller rink.

Like most terrible things, the closing of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House was President Clinton's doing. But there's a chance, as the new administration takes office, that this particular terrible thing will soon be undone. "President-elect Bush would like to reopen the avenue," says transition spokeswoman Julianna Glover Weiss, "and he looks forward to working with the Secret Service to do that."

Privately, Bush has said the same, in less uncertain terms. And the Republican party, in its platform passed last year in Philadelphia, made a firm commitment: "We will reopen Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House as a symbolic expression of our confidence in the restoration of the rule of law." If the Bushies make good on their pledge, they will be reversing one of the signal decisions of the last eight years—local in its practical effect but much larger in its symbolic scope.

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard.

AP/Wide World Photos

The method by which Pennsylvania Avenue was closed was an expression of almost imperial arrogance; Clintonian, even. For most of its history the avenue had served as a major crosstown artery in the capital, linking the east side of town to the west and to Georgetown and suburban Virginia beyond. Crucial to the flow of residents and commuters, it was even more valuable to tourists, who could cruise by in buses and private cars for a Kodak-moment view of the White House, set 300 feet back behind an iron rail fence: a house on a street, inhabited by a president. According to D.C. traffic statistics, roughly 30,000 cars a day passed along the two-block stretch in front of the executive mansion between 15th and 17th Streets NW.

By 1995, the Secret Service had been agitating to close that portion of the avenue for at least 50 years, to no avail. It remained open, and traffic flowed unimpeded, during world wars, assassinations and assassination attempts, urban riots, and the Gulf War, as each president in his turn refused entreaties to shut it down for the sake of his own safety. But with a rash of unrelated incidents—well, three unrelated incidents—in 1994, the Secret Service redoubled its campaign. In September, a man flew a light aircraft onto the South Lawn of the White House, and in the

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following months two separate lunatics opened fire on the mansion from the street.

In protecting the president, federal statute gives virtually unlimited authority to the Treasury secretary, who oversees the Secret Service. "He could close down National Airport if he wanted to," says one congressional staffer who's researched the law. But he requires some "finding of fact" to justify his actions, and so in late '94 the Treasury Department undertook a "security review" of Pennsylvania Avenue. The review itself was classified, but its conclusion was not: The avenue in front of the White House should be closed, even though closing the avenue would not have prevented the incidents that inspired the review. Perhaps for that reason, the review languished until April 1995 and the bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City.

What happened then is murky; some accounts say the Secret Service again pressed the Treasury secretary, Robert Rubin, who took his case to the president, who then authorized the secretary to act; others say that the secretary acted unilaterally. (Trying to straighten it out is like trying to figure out when the president said what to Betty Currie.) In any case, after the close of business on Friday, May 19, 1995, Rubin signed a letter to the head of the Secret Service, directing him to close the avenue "to ensure the protection of the President and others in the White House Complex from explosive devices carried by vehicles near the perimeter." At once flatbed trucks appeared at either end of the two-block stretch, and workers began unloading massive concrete "Jersey barriers" in the dark. By midnight the avenue was closed.

"We had no warning, no signal, nothing," says Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District of Columbia's congressional delegate, who, ex officio, was called with the news, but only as the trucks were being unloaded. Reaction from all quarters—the *Washington Post* editorial page, the D.C. city council, the metropolitan police department, area businesses, cab drivers, even the curate of neighboring St. John's Episcopal Church—was negative, with the exception of members of the skateboarding and rollerblading communities, who by Saturday morning had staked out the avenue as totally rad. The closing required a Herculean redirection of traffic downtown; the much narrower east-west streets parallel to the old Pennsylvania Avenue saw a 30 to 50 percent increase in cars and trucks. Relatively simple crosstown trips lengthened by 15 minutes or more. Five years later, the congestion is only worse.

But the symbolism of a White House under siege rankled people even more. "The real problem, quite apart from the traffic, is the image this conveys of our democracy and our openness as a society," said the Washington architect Arthur Cotton Moore. "Closing Pennsylvania Avenue," said the *Post*, "pulls the shades over a symbol of our open democracy that has endured since the founding of the Republic." "We have nothing to promote if we become a fortress society," said Senator Pat Moynihan. "The only triumph of terrorism is if we become terrified."

Now, this argument from symbolism, especially when expressed in such deep, Moynihanian shades of purple, has its limits, as defenders of the closing point out. After all, we already *are* terrified of terrorism; anyone who doubts it should try to take a quick walk (good luck) through any large airport. Even before the Pennsylvania Avenue shutdown, the White House wasn't much of a "symbol of our open democracy." What it was, was a large mansion with bulletproof windows set back across 100 yards of open lawn studded with surveillance cameras and motion detectors and swarming with armed sentries led by bomb-sniffing police dogs. Those who would open the avenue should fess up and make the more realistic argument: We may be a fortress society, but we don't have to look like one.

This is the implicit point of a RAND Corporation study commissioned by the Federal City Council, one of a dozen or more civic, local, and federal entities who have an interest in a reopened avenue. The RAND researchers attacked the closing on a number of practical fronts. The threat of terrorism, according to people declared expert in the matter, seems to be diminishing, even as our capacity to counter it is more sophisticated than ever. But the fait accompli by the Secret Service allows for no continuing review of the decision to close the avenue, in light of either diminishing threats or improved technology. More immediately, said the Rand report, the Murrah building bombing was never likely to have been duplicated at the White House. The Oklahoma City bombers parked their truck nine feet away from one of the building's four structural pillars; it was this fortuity that made the bomb so devastating. "By comparison," says the report, "the White House is set some 350 ft. back from the south curb of Pennsylvania Avenue: a distance more than thirty five times greater from where the Murrah building truck bomb was situated." Even State Department guidelines require that newly built U.S. embassies be only 100 feet from facing streets.

To these arguments, the Secret Service responds—well, it doesn't really respond. Citing security concerns, the service refuses to engage in public debate about its decisions. It has briefed D.C. officials and members of Congress and congressional staff on closing the avenue, and not all of them have come away convinced. "I didn't buy it," says D.C. council member Jack Evans, whose district includes the neighborhoods around the White House. "What they were doing was using simulated com-

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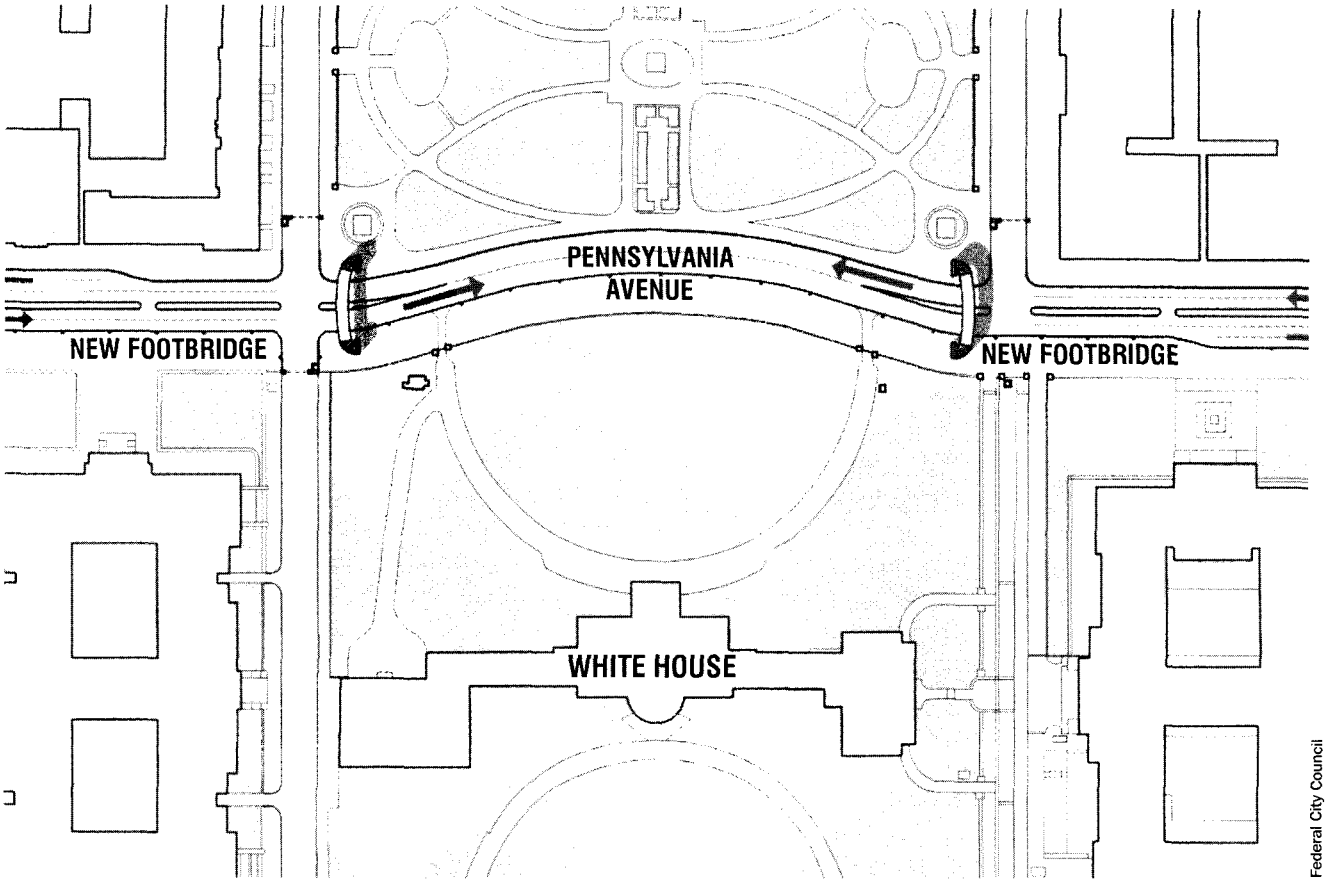

The Federal City Council plan for a reopened Pennsylvania Avenue

puter models of how an explosion of x magnitude, in x-sized Mack truck, would cause x damage to the White House. Totally unrealistic. They were bluffing their way to justify an action they were going to take any way." Delegate Norton is only slightly kinder. "The danger is not imaginary," she says. "But they're pursuing a zero-risk strategy, which is simply not possible. There will always be risk. The question is what's reasonable, in light of other concerns."

The Federal City Council has proposed the most comprehensive plan to reopen the avenue, while still frustrating the intentions of truck bombers. (See illustration.) It calls for narrowing the existing street and bending it northward, to the Lafayette Park side, to extend the distance between the south curb and the White House. At either end of the two-block stretch, a pedestrian bridge would be constructed low enough (less than eight feet high) to block any vehicle larger than an SUV—any vehicle, that is, large enough to carry an explosive that could conceivably reach the White House. Such an alternative, says the council, would restore traffic flow to its pre-1995 levels, reduce the risk of a truck bomb to near-zero, and reconnect the White House to the larger life of the city.

The plan has problems. Why pedestrians would use the foot bridges instead of simply crossing the street is a mystery, and the bridges themselves, thanks to President Bush's Americans with Disabilities Act, would require ramps extending more than a hundred feet in either direction for wheelchair access. But these are scarcely insurmountable. Arthur Cotton Moore, for example, suggests substituting decorative and reinforced gates for the foot bridges, with security kiosks at either side.

As the skateboarders would say: whatever. For now, the avenue sits abandoned. Congressional Republicans, upset at Rubin's high-handed order, have refused since 1995 to authorize funding for any but the most rudimentary improvements. No one is satisfied with the status quo—not even the Secret Service, which would like to see the roadway turned into a park. Not even President Clinton, who by many accounts approved the closing in the first place.

"He's been quite clear about this with me in our conversations," says Norton, who is of course a great admirer of the president. "He tells me he never wanted the avenue closed in the first place—absolutely not. He said if it had been left up to him, it wouldn't have been closed. But the Secret Service . . . he's just very clear on this."

Clintonian, as I say. Time to open it up. ♦

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The Clinton Legacy Abroad

His sins of omission in foreign and defense policy leave us unprepared for the dangers of the next decade.

By Robert Kagan

To watch Bill Clinton flit around the world these past few months, desperately and in some cases dangerously seeking some final "accomplishment" to add to his legacy, has been to see with stunning clarity a fundamental truth about this president's foreign policy: It has been mostly about him.

Over the past year especially, Clinton has been preoccupied with his lasting fame. There was the signing, on the last day of 2000, of the agreement establishing an International Criminal Court, a vain and cynical gesture given the serious flaws of the agreement, which even Clinton acknowledges, and the certainty that the treaty will never be ratified. There was the meaningless trip to Ireland this fall, a visit the president's aides admitted had no substantive value but which provided a lovely and, for Clinton, much-needed spectacle of cheering throngs celebrating the great almost-peacemaker. There was the meaningless visit to Vietnam, with still more cheering crowds, and old Communist bosses offering their thanks for Clinton's long-ago opposition to his own country's effort to protect millions of innocent South Vietnamese from a Communist takeover. And then there was Clinton's evident eagerness to visit an even more brutal Communist thug in North Korea, a visit he called off at the last minute. What stopped him cannot have been the lack of progress toward a meaningful agreement on Pyongyang's ballistic missile program, since Clinton's other lame-duck voyages were entirely futile. Perhaps Clinton reviewed the tapes of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's trip to North Korea in October and decided he did not want the last, lingering image of him to be anything like the shots of her smiling idiotically while starving, terrified children ate their first hearty meal in weeks.

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Instead, last week's meeting with Yasser Arafat will probably offer the final image of President Bill Clinton as world leader: the tireless statesman striving for Middle East peace right up until the last second of his presidency, as the dutiful Washington press corps portrayed him. Yet even senior administration officials admit their boss is now just putting on a show for the home audience, since, as one top adviser put it, "talking about a peace deal is increasingly artificial" amidst the escalating Palestinian violence condoned and perhaps even instigated by Arafat himself.

But in this case, unlike that of Ireland, Clinton's last-minute grandstanding has caused real damage. His stubborn search for a final Middle East settlement in the last year of his presidency, his refusal to heed the signs that such an agreement was impossible, his deliberate raising of hopes that inevitably turned to anger when they were disappointed—all this will be recorded as one of the great foreign policy blunders of recent times. In the blind pursuit of an unattainable peace, Clinton managed to harm American interests, endanger the security of an ally, and bring unnecessary suffering to Israelis and Palestinians alike. And for what? Even as the American-brokered negotiations crumbled and violence erupted earlier this year, Clinton had his people lobbying the Nobel committee for his peace prize. In the end, it was all about Bill Clinton.

Of course, it wasn't always just about fame. In years past it was also about money, money to keep Clinton, and now his wife, in office. Maybe it was inevitable after the Cold War that American business interests would once again trump national security and moral interests, but the Clinton political machine was exceptionally quick and adept in figuring out how foreign policy could be turned into a cash cow. Clinton's first commerce secretary, Ron Brown, died tragically in a plane

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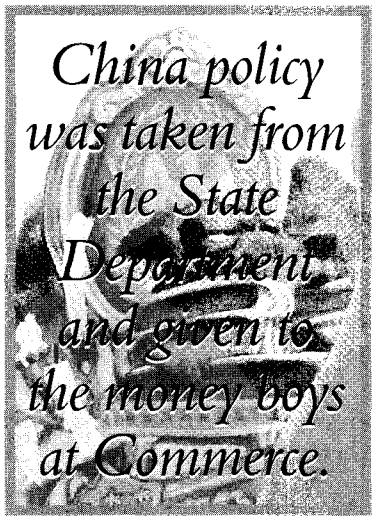
crash. But "Ron Brown diplomacy," the placing of the American foreign policy apparatus at the service of big business and big donors, survived and flourished. And nowhere was the operation more profitable than in China, where the Clinton administration set up a three-way back-scratching arrangement unparalleled in American history. The Chinese wanted access to American high technology so they could modernize their military. American satellite makers, aircraft builders, cell-phone manufacturers, computer makers—not to mention insurance and financial services providers—wanted in on the rich Chinese market. The Clinton machine wanted huge amounts of cash for its campaign war chest. Let's make a deal!

After a brief, shaky start—Clinton, after all, had campaigned against the "butchers of Beijing"—the money machine was put in place. China policy was taken away from the State Department and the Pentagon and given to the money boys at Commerce, at Treasury, at the U.S. Trade Representative's office—all overseen by that once and probably future trade lawyer, Sandy Berger. Controls on military and dual-use technology were eased; responsibility for approving export licenses was shifted from the State Department to the Commerce Department; security lapses by American companies were soft-pedaled. And the campaign contributions poured in.



The whole scheme was epitomized in the person of Bernard Schwartz, head of Loral Corporation and a manufacturer of satellites, eager to launch his products atop less costly, if less reliable, Chinese missiles. It just so happened that Schwartz was also the Democratic party's top donor, reliably pumping millions of dollars in "soft" money into party coffers. Loral was caught handing over sensitive American know-how on missile technology to the Chinese, has been indicted by a grand jury, and remains under investigation. But that didn't stop Clinton from approving a new license for Schwartz to launch more satellites on Chinese rockets, over the Justice Department's objection but with Berger's full concurrence.

That was the China scam at the retail level. At the wholesale level, it was grandiloquently defended as part of the Clinton administration's policy of "engagement." As China's human rights record deteriorated, as democracy activists, Falun Gong members, Christians, and Tibetan Buddhists were rounded up, imprisoned, tortured, and murdered; as China modernized its military, fired missiles off the coast of Taiwan, bullied neighbors in the South China Sea, threatened Los Angeles, and stole American nuclear weapons secrets; as China provided missile and nuclear weapons material and technologies to Pakistan and Iran—the Clinton administration never wavered, never admitted a setback, never hesitated in its drive to win permanent most-favored-nation status for a country that Clinton insisted on describing as America's "strategic partner." This was the big payoff for corporate America. And here, fame and fortune mingled in the Clintonian calculation, for pushing permanent MFN through Congress this past summer was to be another part of Clinton's legacy. Never mind that the Chinese, as many predicted, have since shown no intention of abiding by the terms they negotiated for their entry into the World Trade Organization.

When it wasn't about personal fame and campaign cash, Bill Clinton's foreign policy was often about politics, the politics of staying in office. Even what Clinton did right he often did for the wrong reasons. For two years he refused to intervene in Bosnia, despite the slaughter of untold thousands of innocents, because he didn't want to pay the political price for sending U.S. troops into a "quagmire." When he finally did summon the courage to act, after Serb troops started overrunning U.N. peacekeeping positions, it was only because Richard Holbrooke reminded Clinton that he had promised to send American troops to extract the forces of U.S. allies under siege. If he was going to have to send our armed forces into harm's way anyhow, Clinton figured he might as well send them in to win. This was the right call but hardly a visionary act.

Domestic politics drove Clinton's Haiti policy, too, in all directions. First he sent troops to Haiti, in part to solve a politically difficult refugee problem in Florida. But then, after a successful intervention, Clinton bowed to other domestic political pressures to get U.S. troops out as soon as possible. Instead of designing a strategy for keeping Haiti from going off track again, the Clinton administration abdicated the responsibility it assumed when it intervened. In Haiti, in Somalia, and elsewhere, Clinton and his advisers had the stomach only to be halfway imperialists. When the heat was on, they tended to look for the exits.

As it was, because Clinton was afraid of the political consequences of using force, he frequently acted only when backed into a corner. In Kosovo, he avoided military

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action against the Serbs until it was too late to prevent the ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians. Then, bowing to political pressure from the neo-isolationist Republican Congress, Clinton ruled out using ground forces. The effect was to prolong the war and the suffering. Slobodan Milosevic caved in only when, more than two months into the air war, Clinton finally started to realize that ground troops might be necessary after all.

At least Bosnia and Kosovo were relative successes. Elsewhere, Clinton's propensity to back into a course of action and then do too little, too late had a higher cost. In Iraq, Clinton walked right up to the edge of using force in February 1998, only to panic and let U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan give Saddam Hussein a reprieve. Once again, it was fear of employing ground troops that undid Clinton's strategy, for as the confrontation with Saddam drew near, administration officials realized that bombing alone—the casualty-minimizing and therefore politically safer option—would accomplish nothing. And, indeed, that was precisely what Clinton accomplished a year later, when he ordered a futile four-day air attack on Iraq. That bombing, known as Operation Desert Fox, was ostensibly aimed at retarding Saddam's missile and weapons programs: Sandy Berger's "whack-a-mole" strategy. But its real purpose, as usual, was to solve political problems at home. In fact, it accomplished less than nothing in Iraq. It gave Saddam the excuse to kick out U.N. arms inspectors, and it destroyed what little international will was left to maintain sanctions against Iraq. As Clinton's Iraq policy has collapsed, his strategy has been purely political and entirely cynical: to keep Iraq off the front pages, to pretend that Saddam is still in his "box," and to let the next president deal with the threat of this rearmed Middle East predator.

On a couple of prominent issues, Clinton showed a bit more gumption. He played his part in pushing NATO expansion through Congress, albeit with plenty of help from leading Republicans. Probably the enlargement of the alliance to include the former Soviet bloc nations of central and Eastern Europe will go down as Clinton's most significant foreign policy accomplishment (though Clinton himself appears relatively indifferent to it: There have been no celebratory trips to Warsaw or Prague this year). And with regard to Russia, notwithstanding the Monday-morning quarterbacking of many critics (including members of the incoming Bush administration), Clinton was basically right to stick with Boris Yeltsin. For all Yeltsin's flaws, the real alternatives to him—Communists and right-wing crazies like Vladimir Zhirinovsky—were always much worse. Clinton's policy toward the former Yugoslavia, despite all the hesitations and miscalculations, ultimately produced Milosevic's downfall. Overall, one must say that Clinton's efforts to solidify a Europe "whole and free" have been a success.

But these successes are overshadowed by Clinton's four grand failures: his failure to contain China, to remove Saddam, to maintain adequate American military strength, and to even begin to deploy a missile defense system adequate to protect the United States and our closest allies.

These four failures are intimately related and may well converge most unpleasantly for the next administration. In the next four years, either Iraq or China is likely to provoke a major crisis that will require George W. Bush to make some very hard choices. Indeed, it is possible to imagine crises occurring simultaneously in the Persian Gulf and in the Taiwan Straits, since both Beijing and Baghdad know that the American military will have difficulty meeting two challenges at once. It is likely that both crises will involve the threat of ballistic missile attacks on the United States, its troops, or its allies. China already has the capability to execute such attacks; for Iraq, it is just a matter of time. And when the crisis occurs, it will suddenly become bracingly clear that we have no way of defending ourselves, no way of avoiding the blackmail that will be employed to constrain our response, whether to an Iraqi attack on Kuwait, a Chinese attack on Taiwan, or both.

America's unreadiness to handle these two entirely predictable threats, not to mention others that are less predictable: *That* is Bill Clinton's real legacy. And, in truth, it can only partly be attributed to Clinton's egoism and political caution. To be sure, it would have been unpopular to spend more money to keep the American military strong enough to handle its global responsibilities. And it would have run afoul of the Democrats' mindless opposition to missile defense and their equally mindless devotion to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to go ahead and build the most effective form of missile shield. But it was probably not mere political cowardice that led Clinton to underfund the military and kill the most promising missile defense technologies. In both cases, let us give Clinton credit: He did it out of conviction.

The truth is, Bill Clinton wanted to make deep cuts in the Pentagon budget, far deeper than those already made by the first Bush administration at the end of the Cold War. In 1992 candidate Clinton campaigned on a promise to cut an additional $60 billion in defense spending over five years. When he took office, the first budget he submitted called for cuts of over $100 billion. Through the first six years alone, Clinton had cut more than $160 billion in

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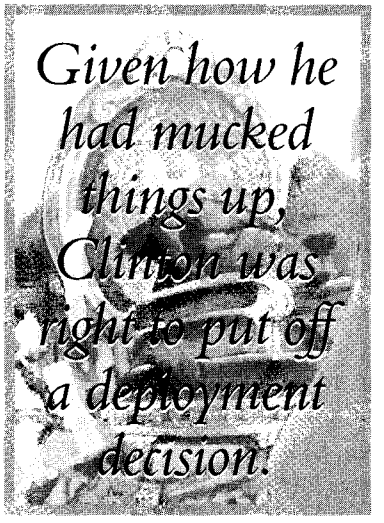
defense spending. Only as the state of the U.S. armed forces looked to become an issue in the 2000 election campaign did Clinton offer miniscule increases, and even most of these were to come after he left office. This was a man with a mission.

Every year Clinton and his top officials denied that the Pentagon budget was too small. Every year they denied that the active engagement of American forces overseas in the post-Cold War era required investments not much below what had been required to contain the Soviet Union. When aircraft carrier battle groups had to be shuttled back and forth between the Persian Gulf and East Asia to meet the crisis du jour, when the air campaign over Kosovo used up the lion's share of the Air Force's available resources, leaving too little to cover the no-fly zones over Iraq, the Clinton administration insisted there was nothing to worry about.



So now the chickens come home to roost—but not on Bill Clinton's watch. As the Clinton team heads off into the sunset, we begin to learn that the defense budget is, indeed, dangerously depleted. Top officials in the Clinton Pentagon now talk about a gap between defense strategy and defense resources of as much as $60 billion *per year*. Just a couple of weeks ago, James Schlesinger and Harold Brown, defense secretaries in the Ford and Carter administrations, recommended increases in defense spending of 20 percent, a more than $50 billion increase over the current budget. These are among the more moderate estimates. Air Force Secretary F. Whitten Peters recently expressed his view that the defense shortfall is probably $100 billion annually. All of which makes a mockery of Al Gore's now irrelevant campaign pledge to spend $100 billion more on defense over the next ten years. Unfortunately, it also casts in an unfavorable light the even paltrier defense numbers cited by the Bush campaign.

Clinton's willful evisceration of the defense budget during his two terms in office is all the more appalling when one considers that he cut while the American economy was soaring and the federal deficit was shrinking and turning into a surplus. Bush, if he is so inclined, will probably have to fight for bigger defense budgets in a time of economic stagnation if not outright recession. In fact, Clinton may have left too little time to turn the ship around before the next major international crisis.

The same goes for missile defense. Clinton came to office determined to kill the programs begun by Ronald Reagan and continued during the Bush years. And he managed to kill the most promising of them, partly out of partisan conviction born of years of Democratic opposition to Reagan's "Star Wars," partly out of a desire to save more money, and partly out of the theological belief that the ABM Treaty remained, as Clinton officials liked to say, the "cornerstone" of strategic stability. This despite the fact that bilateral strategic arms control agreements between the United States and Russia have become less and less relevant to American security requirements in an age of Saddam Husseins and Kim Jong Ils.

Little wonder that when Clinton was forced by political pressures to come up with some kind of missile defense program—forced, that is, by the Rumsfeld commission's finding that the missile threat from North Korea and others was advancing more rapidly than the CIA had wanted to admit—the program his team designed proved to be inadequate. Little wonder that American allies in Europe, who were informed only belatedly of the Clinton administration's hastily devised plan, were unpersuaded. Little wonder that, after promising to begin building a missile defense system to be in place by 2005 to meet emerging threats, Clinton at the end of the day punted. Given how he had mucked things up, Clinton was right to put off a deployment decision. But what he is leaving Bush is a diplomatic, political, and technological mess, and it will take a mighty effort by the new administration to get an effective missile defense system in place by the time it might actually be needed.

The world was kind to America in the 1990s. The country got rich, and the inertial momentum from the great successes achieved in the 1980s, when the Cold War was won, and in 1991, when Saddam Hussein was driven from Kuwait, allowed the nation to coast forward with little presidential leadership. It is unlikely, however, that the next decade will be so accommodating. Some of the challenges we will face are already discernible; others lie out of sight just over the horizon. The great danger today is that we will be unprepared to meet both the known and the unknown dangers. It was not the job of average American citizens to worry about such things this past decade, to make sure the government was preparing the nation for a more dangerous future. That was the president's job. But Bill Clinton was President Feel-good during a fat and happy decade. And sooner or later, his carelessness will exact a price. ♦

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Women of the Clinton Scandals

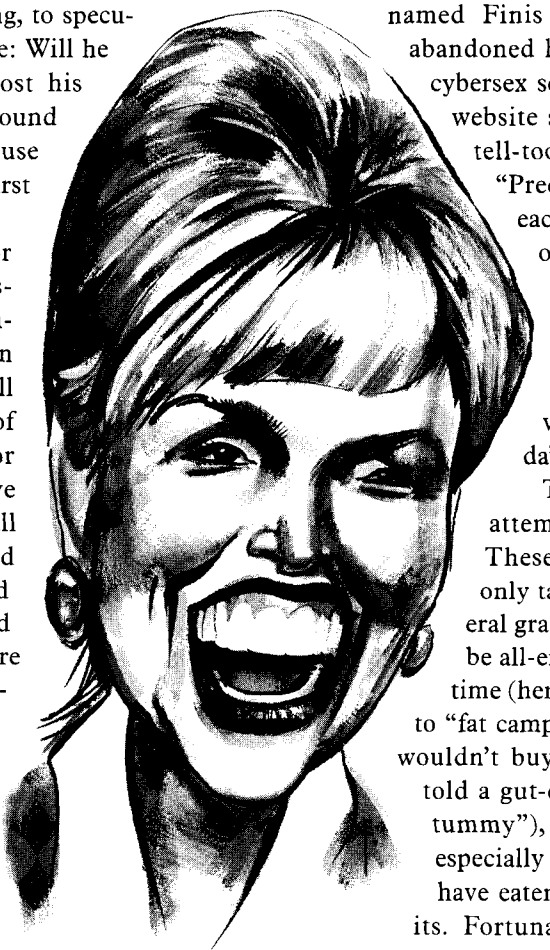
Whatever happened to Paula and Gennifer and Monica and Connie and Sally and Dolly and Susan and . . .

By Matt Labash

As the sun sets on Bill Clinton's presidency, it is easy to give in to sentimentalizing, to legacy-assessing, to speculating about his future: Will he run for Senate or host his own talk show? Will he putter around his rutabaga garden in fuzzy house slippers? Where will he take his first date?

As journalists plumb for answers to these important questions, the most distinctive contingent of the Clinton era has been grossly neglected. They come in all shapes and hair colors, some of them without benefit of bleach or surgical enhancement. They've started websites and written tell-all books. They do nude spreads and penance, and one of them even did time. They've been hookers and housewives and ladies all. They are the Women Of the Clinton Scandals (WOCS).

In the interest of catching up and making sense of the last eight years, we called some WOCS to take one last lap around infamy's track. Space considerations necessitate limiting ourselves to a representative sample. Besides, as of late, no one's seen much of Sally Perdue (the former Miss Arkansas who was threatened after disclosing the ugly particulars of her affair with Clinton—such as his "wearing my black nightgown, playing the sax badly"). And neither were we able to contact Gennifer Flowers, currently traveling with her husband, the unfortunately named Finis Shelnutt. Since Flowers has abandoned her Gennifer's Girls interactive cybersex service, she's stayed busy on her website selling "Presidente" cigars, her tell-too-much book ("Willard" and "Precious" were their pet names for each other's privates), and pictures of herself. When not engaging in presidential commerce, the cabaret veteran has brought the gift of song to an international audience and lectured on "Surviving Sex, Power and Propaganda" at the Oxford Union.



Gennifer Flowers

Illustrations by Fred Harper

There are also WOCS who are attempting to rise above the past. These days, Monica Lewinsky will only talk about the Big Creep to a federal grand jury. While Lewinsky used to be all-embarrassing-disclosures, all-the-time (her book informed us that she went to "fat camp," threw a hissy fit when daddy wouldn't buy her a Snoopy telephone, and told a gut-conscious Clinton, "I like your tummy"), she is all business these days, especially since her tax and legal expenses have eaten through her Jenny Craig profits. Fortunately, she has found a way to "reawaken my creative senses" by selling purses online (our favorite: the Moroccan Mermaid Button Purse). As she told the Pure Oxygen website, "Bags are my life."

Still, there are other WOCS with stories to tell (and with listed phone numbers). In the beginning, there

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was Connie Hamzy, the infamous rock'n'roll groupie (who claims a résumé stretching from Vanilla Ice to Richard Carpenter) and the first of candidate Clinton's extramarital headaches. In the January 1992 *Penthouse*, Hamzy detailed her 1984 encounter with Governor Clinton, when he tried to pick her up in her skimpy purple bikini at a Little Rock hotel pool. After stealing a quick grope, they were unable to find an available room, and their session went unconsummated. As *Newsweek* reported, Hillary Clinton wanted to destroy Hamzy's credibility, such as it was (Hamzy boasted of taking on 24 guys during a single Allman Brothers concert). But Hamzy, who passed a polygraph test administered by the *American Spectator*, persuasively declared, "I may be a slut, but I'm no liar."

Since her disclosure, it's been tough going for the woman Grand Funk Railroad immortalized in song as "Sweet Sweet Connie." In 1995, she was cited by police in a Little Rock park after her thong bikini failed to conceal her sufficiently. In 1998, her campaign for mayor of Little Rock self-destructed when she was arrested for public intoxication. To support her groupie habit, she's worked a string of dead-end jobs from part-time retail clerk to breeder of Persian cats. So it's understandable she grows agitated when I ask her for a Clinton assessment. "What's in it for me?" she asks. "Free publicity," I offer. "I can't eat publicity," she snarls. "I'm not talking unless you're talking money. Call me again, and I'll call Bruce Lindsey at the White House." I try to explain that Lindsey only intimidates people who've had sexual contact with Clinton, which, as of this writing, excludes me. But she abruptly hangs up.

Paula Jones

Celebrating the miracle of airbrushing, Paula Jones has, in its latest issue, joined Sweet Connie in the *Penthouse* pantheon with a multi-page layout and an accompanying interview in which she denounces conservatives who used her harassment charge for political ends. While Jones did not respond to interview requests, her estranged husband Steve did. A failed actor and airline ticketing agent, Steve had the first inkling their marriage was going south after Paula jeopardized their credibility by lending her name to the Celebrity Psychic Network. Her *Penthouse* spread has him apoplectic, though he doesn't think it will win him custody of their children, since in California, "you can be a prostitute and they'll give you custody." Steve allows that he "enjoyed playing the chess game" that nearly toppled Clinton. But he says that while his wife was inappropriately propositioned, "she certainly shouldn't have stayed [in Clinton's hotel room] as long as she did." With a mound of debts and a busted marriage, Steve says, "I sometimes sit down with a good Cabernet and think, What the hell was it all about, and would I do it again? Absolutely not."

Less remorseful is Dolly Kyle Browning, the spunky Dallas real estate attorney with self-described "sea-mist green eyes" who was outed during impeachment as one of Clinton's paramours. Not just any paramour, mind you, like the "12-year one night stand" that Browning says Clinton conducted with Flowers. Browning has known Clinton since they were children, and says that as a pair of sex addicts (she's in recovery), they had a 30-year multi-dimensional relationship which she has detailed in her self-published roman a clef *Purposes of the Heart* (best character: Mallory Cheatham, the fat-ankled wife of southern governor Cameron Coulter).

Though Browning planned a trilogy, she interrupted writing "book two to write book true," a non-fiction treatment of her experiences entitled *Perjuries of the Heart*. When asked what Clinton should do next, Browning replies, "He needs to turn and repent and get his life straight." What she believes he'll do instead is a reverse Reagan. "Reagan did the B-movies first and then the presidency," she says. "Clinton will do the presidency and then the B-movies. He has to be in the limelight, and he'll do whatever it takes to get there."

While Browning is waiting for Clinton to turn up in *Porky's 4*, Susan McDougal wouldn't be able to afford a matinee ticket. Out of work and living at her parents' home in Camden, Ark., Clinton's Whitewater partner is

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battle-hardened after serving 22 months in seven different prisons resulting from her refusal to testify before Ken Starr, whom she has likened to Charles Manson. Now taking up the mantle of prison reform (she is incredulous that I'm unaware prison toilet tanks double as water fountains—"you've lived a sheltered life"), McDougal says she doesn't resent Clinton in the least, though she wouldn't mind a presidential pardon to erase her substantial contempt fines. McDougal's been romantically linked to Clinton, a charge she categorically denies, though she does find him "brotherly attractive." The suspicion is hardly surprising, she says, since "any woman of a certain age in Arkansas was suspected." She's elated about Hillary's election, though of the Clinton marriage, she says, "I can't figure that whole deal out." McDougal thinks Clinton's been a "great president," but her praise comes with a caveat. She wishes he hadn't been embroiled in the Lewinsky scandal, which she says kept Starr on the case, costing her an additional six months in jail.

Susan McDougal

Two non-consensual WOCS who are more liberal with their Clinton criticisms are Kathleen Willey and Juanita Broaddrick, allegedly pawed and raped, respectively. Willey is now happily remarried after filing bankruptcy as a result of debts incurred by her first husband, who committed suicide on the day of her Clinton encounter. After being systematically harassed by anonymous tormentors who, among other things, stole her cat and threatened her children, after being demonized by administration soldiers who leaked her private correspondence, and after developing a nasty case of stress-related shingles, Willey has dropped her lawsuit against the administration. "What they did was wrong," says Willey. "But this will take years in court with the Clintons, and I just don't have the stomach to be in the same room with those people anymore."

Of all those she resents, Hillary is foremost. "She put a lot of this stuff in motion. She put Sid Blumenthal out there," says Willey. The $8 million book deal Hillary secured is especially irksome to Willey, who was once accused by Clinton lackeys of trying to turn a quick literary buck (which she never attempted). "You know what that book's going to be?" asks Willey. "It's going to be page after page of lies." Willey adds that "she'll write that like she wrote the book on entertaining [the first lady's recent offering, *An Invitation to the White House*]. Give me a break. I worked in that social office. Hillary Clinton's expertise you could fit in the head of a thimble—she doesn't know a dessert spoon from a soup spoon."

Two years ago, Juanita Broaddrick claimed that she was raped in 1978 by then Arkansas attorney general Bill Clinton, who bit her lip until it was swollen then told her before leaving, "You better put some ice on that." Broaddrick's life has returned to normal: tennis matches, tending to the animals on her Van Buren, Ark., spread, gathering her nursing home business's records for the mysterious tax audit that seems to come the way of many of the WOCS. Broaddrick, who believed finally coming forward would lead to Clinton's removal from office, says she is partly to blame that the controversy blew over (Clinton left his denial to his lawyer and hasn't addressed it since). "I should've come forward sooner," she says.

On the whole, Broaddrick says her disclosure has been beneficial to her marriage and mental health. Still, whenever she sees Clinton on television, "There's just a hatred. I want to go through the TV screen and strangle the man. I just wish he'd be removed from public sight, but I feel like he's going to stay active and try to get [Hillary] elected [president] in 2004."

Asked what they'd say to Clinton if they ran into him at the Stop'n'Shop, Willey laughs. "You mean if he was buying a pound of bacon?" she asks, before lapsing into thoughtful silence. "I'd say that my family worked for you, my children admired you. I am just so profoundly disappointed that you turned to this, that you did this to people like me, for going into a courtroom and telling the truth under oath." Broaddrick is less circumspect: "I'd tell him to go to hell." ♦

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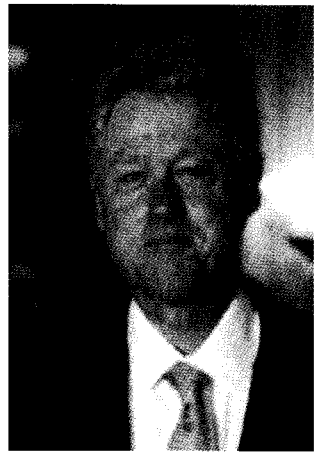
Thank you President Clinton for finally speaking out for drug policy reform!



In an interview published on December 25, 2000[1] President Clinton expressed the need for dramatic reform in drug policy.

Here are President Clinton's views:

"We really need a re-examination of our entire policy on imprisonment."

" . . . small amounts of marijuana have been decriminalized in some places, and should be."

"...a lot of people are in prison today because they have drug problems or alcohol problems. And too many of them are getting out-particularly out of state systems-without treatment, without education, without skill, without serious efforts at job placement.

"I think the sentences in many cases are too long for nonviolent offenders, and the facilities are not structured to maximize success when people get out ... I think this whole thing needs to be re-examined."

"I certainly think [mandatory sentences] need to be re-examined. And the disparities are unconscionable between crack and powdered cocaine. I tried to change that. The Republican Congress was willing to narrow but not eliminate them, the theory being that people who use crack were more violent that people who used cocaine. What they really meant was: People who used crack were more likely to be poor-and, coincidentally black or brown. And therefore not have money. Those people that used cocaine were more likely to be rich, pay for it and therefore be peaceful."

"I don't believe, by and large, in permanent lifetime penalties. There is a bill in Congress today that has bipartisan support-that would restore voting rights to former prisoners after their full sentences have been discharged."

Let's pray George W. Bush will face up to this important issue at the beginning of his term in office, not the end.

For information contact **Common Sense for Drug Policy,**
Kevin B. Zeese, President, 3220 "N" Street NW, #141, Washington, DC 20007
at info@csdp.org and 703-354-9050

[1] *Interview of President Clinton by Jan Wenner, Rolling Stone, December 28, 2000. http://www.rollingstone.com*

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All That Jazz

Ken Burns in Black and White

By Diana West

Courtesy Frank Driggs collection

Louis Armstrong was a great trumpet player, a major jazz innovator, and a widely beloved entertainer. But was he the Second Coming? This is the hardly exaggerated implication of Ken Burns's *Jazz* documentary, and it's one well worth pondering—not for what it says about the great Satchmo, but for what it says about a tightly blinkered view of history and race that has come to dominate the presentation of music in America.

Burns—who first came to fame with his PBS documentary on the Civil War—is an admitted musical neophyte. But he found as mentors the trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and writers Stanley Crouch, Gerald Early, and Albert Murray, who anchor the commentary for the nineteen-hour documentary Burns has now produced. They also provide the thematic core of the book *Jazz*, which has been published in tandem with the documentary's PBS premiere this month, along with several *Ken Burns Jazz* CD compilations.

The average viewer might expect of these men both a helping hand in introducing the novice to a new life of listening pleasure and, at the same time, apt historical and musical context for the devotee. But their role in the Burns documentary proves quite different. Rather than helping viewers to *hear* the rich and varied history of jazz, they are there to instruct us in how to *see* it: as the exclusive domain of the black, blues-oriented musicians who have long suffered at the hands of the white and derivative interloper.

It's an old story, but there's something freshly shocking about watching it unfold—unchecked, even unremarked upon—as a matter of uncontroversial fact, "proven" by the seeing-is-believing conventions of documentary-making: the grainy photos and film clips, the talking heads, the soothing voice-over narration, and the marvelous music (which is, by the way, all too often voiced-over by those talking heads). The result is a vigorous exercise in political correctness, a distortion of cultural history that only deepens racial division while ill-serving the music it sets out to celebrate. Even more dispiriting is the fact that Ken Burns passed up a genuine opportunity to showcase one of the only organically and expansively multicultural movements in American history—the evolution of jazz.

Of course, neither Burns nor his mentors see the music that way. Where there was an unprecedented mixing of musical forms and colors a century or so ago, they see near-isolated black creativity. Where there was a blending of black rhythmic virtuosity with European harmonic sophistication, they see black musical separatism. As various musicologists have reminded us, what became a bona fide American musical vernacular in the twentieth century emerged from a complex cacophony: Negro spirituals and blues, Caribbean dances, Methodist hymns, North Country modal ballads, cowboy

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round-up tunes, gallops, hornpipes, polkas, "nationality" tunes from Europe, Victorian ballads—not to mention the national craze for brass bands, and the emergence of Tin Pan Alley. But this historic, eclectic mix remains out of earshot of *Jazz*. The essence of this documentary is blues, the blacks who played those blues, and the whites who tried to play them and couldn't.

Such a point of view, as noted several years ago by Terry Teachout in a searing *Commentary* essay about the racial cleansing of jazz at Lincoln Center, stems from what may be called the "racialist" school of jazz theory. Murray, Crouch, and Marsalis—joined in *Jazz* by Early and, of course, Burns—all enthusiastically subscribe to it. Teachout defined this outlook as "an ideology in which race is a primary factor in the making of aesthetic judgments." At New York City's Lincoln Center, under the direction of Marsalis and Crouch, the racialist ideology has played out in a series of jazz programs based on the work of black players, composers, and arrangers. In Ken Burns's *Jazz*, it has been codified for the general audience.

It couldn't be otherwise, given the guides Burns has selected. Albert Murray is the author of *Stomping the Blues*, a 1976 explication of jazz as an outgrowth of the blues, which was ardently praised by Stanley Crouch as "the first real aesthetic theory of jazz." The book might also be called a jazz racialist's bible. You can get its flavor from the fact that Murray's single assessment of white jazzmen occurs in a perfectly poisonous caption accompanying a photograph of a few white and several black musicians. Murray derides the whites—among them Miff Mole, Gene Krupa, Bud Freeman, and Gerry Mulligan—as members of the so-called "third line," a play on New Orleans parade lingo, suggesting worthless followers and hangers-on. This isn't respectable music criticism; it's racially charged invective.

If anything, Gerald Early is even more direct. "The greatest practitioners of this kind of music have been African American," he states in the documentary. "It comes from a particular kind of American experience with democracy, with America, with capitalism, with a whole bunch of other stuff." To accept this point of view requires the strict segregation of all black musicians from white musicians—ranking Cootie Williams, Art Blakey, and Thelonius Monk above Harry James, Buddy Rich, and Mel Powell. (It calls to mind a famous 1950s "color-blind test" the

Courtesy Frank Driggs collection

Louis Armstrong

critic Leonard Feather gave trumpeter Roy Eldridge, who had boasted he could tell a jazz player's race just by listening; Eldridge incorrectly guessed the race of almost every musician who was played for him.) It may be possible to perform the kind of subjective ranking of master musicians that *Jazz* attempts, but there is something perverse about doing it entirely by racial bloc, which is what *Jazz* forces the viewer to do.

Consider Wynton Marsalis's shameful explanation that Benny Goodman's white skin—not his electrifying clarinet playing, and certainly not his creation of the big band—earned him the title of the "King of Swing." "The majority of people who bought the records were white," says Marsalis (who is to *Jazz* what Shelby Foote was to Burns's Civil War series: the touchstone commentator for the duration). "The majority of the people who wrote about it were white, the record companies were owned by whites. Just the music came out of the Afro-American community. So it just stands to reason that the 'King' would be white." Just in case a viewer doesn't get the full import, Burns cuts wordlessly to a vintage portrait of Duke Ellington, whose place in the racialist theory of jazz is that of the legitimate but denied musical monarch.

To uphold this and other unabashedly racialist theories, Burns's commentators must boost black musicians to heights beyond reach and denigrate white musicians to mediocrity. Which brings us back to Louis Armstrong and his role in the documentary. It bears repeating: Louis Armstrong was a great trumpeter, a major jazz innovator, and a widely beloved entertainer. But was he, as viewers are informed, "a gift from God"? "American music's Bach, Dante, and Shakespeare"? The creator of "the melodic, rhythmic vocabulary that all of the big bands wrote music out of"? The creator of "some of the most abstract and sophisticated music that anybody has ever heard, short of Bach"? Someone with "an unprecedented sense of rhythm"? "The greatest musician in the world"? Is it true, as Burns writes in the series's accompanying book, that "Louis Armstrong is to twentieth-century music (I did not say jazz) what Einstein is to physics, Freud is to psychiatry, and the Wright Brothers are to travel"?

The point is neither to criticize Armstrong nor to deny his impact on American music. The point is rather to question the near-hysterical hyperbole that characterizes *Jazz* in its assessments of its pantheon players—Armstrong above all, along with Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis, joined by Count Basie, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Thelonius

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Monk, and Art Blakey (and, what do you know, Wynton Marsalis).

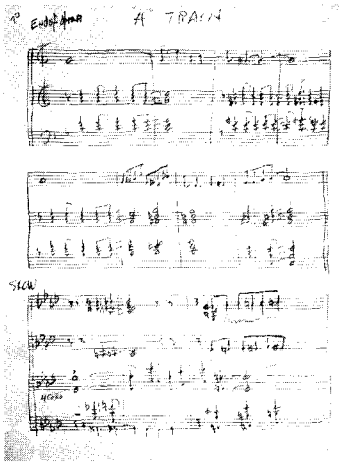
Duke Ellington, for example, is "America's greatest composer," who "couldn't write or record anything other than masterpieces," all the while creating "chords that were never heard before" (at least by Ken Burns). Billie Holiday was "the greatest jazz singer of them all," and even "the single most influential singer American music has ever produced." (Of course, Bessie Smith is also said to be "the most important female vocalist in the history of jazz," so go figure.) Count Basie "had the greatest rhythm section in jazz history," and "a pulse that was definitive"; indeed, "no band had a greater impact than Count Basie and his band."

The flip side to this feverish pitch is the low-key letdown, the undercutting technique perfected in *Jazz* to deflate the reputations of those white musicians who even rate a mention. (The documentary also presents baleful historical footage of lynchings, Ku Klux Klan marches, and "whites only" signs to drive the point home.) Benny Goodman, for one, is consistently depicted as something of a commercial fraud whose success came at the expense of others, particularly Fletcher Henderson, a black arranger of great talent without whom, it is implied, Goodman wouldn't have amounted to much.

Even Goodman's early sessions with black musicians—beginning with 1934 recordings that ultimately led to serendipitous collaborations with pianist Teddy Wilson and vibes player Lionel Hampton, among others—are presented in such a way as to suggest petty acts of self-aggrandizement: "Benny Goodman saw no reason why mere custom and prejudice should keep him from improving his band," the narrator intones, slipping yet another compliment into the bandleader's back. After what Goodman suffers in *Jazz*, it is a smarmy thing that his picture is used to sell the documentary's boxed CD collection.

Every *Jazz* viewer will have his own list of omissions and gloss-overs. Mine begins with Oscar Peterson, Gene Krupa, and Mel Powell. Other regrettable gaps include the musically daring Boswell Sisters, especially considering the influence of Connie Boswell on Ella Fitzgerald, for instance. And, speaking of Ella Fitzgerald, why is there hardly any mention of "the First Lady of Song" following her debut as a teenager singing novelty tunes? Indeed, there are few singers featured in *Jazz* aside from Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, and Bessie Smith—no jazz-age Bing Crosby, no Mel Tormé, and no band vocalists.

Which brings us to what may be the most telling omission of *Jazz*: its complete disregard of American popular song. To be sure, instrumentals were at



Original score for "Take the A-train" by Billy Strayhorn

the heart of jazz, from Count Basie's "One O'Clock Jump" to Benny Goodman's version of "Sing, Sing, Sing" to Dizzy Gillespie's orchestration of "A Night in Tunisia." But so were songs by the likes of Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Rodgers & Hart, Harold Arlen, the Gershwins, and others. The standards of the jazz songbook composed by these men—who were, pace Ken Burns, mainly white and often Jewish—are too numerous to list, but jazz lovers would be bereft without Louis Armstrong's rendition of Hoagy Carmichael's "Stardust," Sarah Vaughan's version of Vernon Duke's "Autumn in New York," Tommy Dorsey's version of Irving Berlin's "Blue Skies" (vocal by Frank Sinatra), Coleman Hawkins's version of John Green's "Body and Soul," and John Coltrane on Rodgers & Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things" ("a cloying little waltz," says *Jazz*), to name just a few.

Aside from Duke Ellington, the only composer I remember hearing about in *Jazz* is George Gershwin, peremptorily dismissed as having "spent countless hours listening to black piano players in Harlem." Of course, as Albert Murray would have it, jazz performers produced their own material. "Blues musicians," he explained in *Stomping the Blues*, "proceed as if the Broadway musical were in fact a major source of crude but fascinating folk materials!"

Ken Burns seems receptive to this rather outré point of view. *Jazz* explains how it was that Louis Armstrong managed to transform "the most superficial love songs into great art," and how poor Billie Holiday had to do the same, turning "routinely mediocre music into great art." ("Art" is a common word in *Jazz*.) Robin and Rainger's "Easy Living"—a favorite Holiday recording—springs to mind as an example of the tripe the poor woman had to sing. No wonder she took to drugs. And while we're on the subject of root causes, consider poor Bix Beiderbecke, the lyrical and legendary cornetist who came to a tragic end at twenty-eight, a victim, as one *Jazz* theorist would have it, of artistic segregation: If Bix had only been permitted to play with black musicians—who were, we are told, "as good and in some cases better than he was"—he might not have died so young.

Over Burns's preface to the book version of *Jazz* there stands a quotation from Duke Ellington, who said "the music is so free that many people say it is the only unhampered, unhindered expression of complete freedom yet produced in this country." We can indulge a great musician, but it is tough to take this kind of faux-intellectual stuff from Burns and the rest of his *Jazz* band. In the end, these nineteen hours of film are about too many angry axes and too many senseless words. Fortunately, what endures is the music, so much of which remains available, beckoning anyone—of any color—who has an open ear. ♦

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The Poverty of Nations

Is it bad culture or bad laws that keep some countries poor? BY MICHAEL NOVAK

In the overlooked parts of the earth, the most amazing forces of cultural dynamism are sometimes hidden. Take Peru, for instance, where, in 1971, an obscure diocesan priest named Gustavo Gutierrez published a book called *A Theology of Liberation* that stimulated revolutions all over Latin America. Simultaneously, the primitive Marxists of the "Shining Path" were conducting a brutal war of intimidation in the Peruvian mountains. In Lima, the great novelist Mario Vargas Llosa was turning away from the Left and entering politics, while a dynamic community of Japanese immigrants—among them, Alberto Fujimori—were mounting steadily upward in economic and social power.

From this maelstrom came as well the most stimulating of the third world's social thinkers, Hernando de Soto. While more colorful and flamboyant figures were in battle all around him, de Soto quietly opened a research center in Lima called the Institute for Liberty and Democracy. His first book, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*, concluded that socialist methods helped the poor very little, but that the existing versions of third-world capitalism were also failing. So de Soto set his band of assistants a single question: How can the poor be brought within the circle of economic development?

The Mystery of Capital
Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else
by Hernando de Soto
Basic, 276 pp., $27.50

Culture Matters
How Values Shape Human Progress
edited by Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington
Basic, 304 pp., $28

The answer grew from his discovery that the vast majority of people in Peru were neither peasants nor proletarians but, in fact, small-scale *entrepreneurs*—and illegal entrepreneurs, at that. Having left the land for the city, where there were few factories to employ them, they had built an entire economy of small businesses, supplying nine-tenths of the public transport in Lima and building half the houses. But they were kept outside the legal economy, without protections of law, property titles, or sensible practice, and their activities were subject to official penalties and harassment. (At the time, setting up a legal business in Peru required more than two hundred days of full-time effort, with fees and bribes that could easily amount to three times the average annual income.)

Before the poor can toil up out of poverty, de Soto decided, they need to be able to incorporate small businesses easily, to find low-cost entrepreneurial credit (micro-loans, really), and to acquire legal title to their homes and businesses. De Soto's analysis was so persuasive that in the early and creative stage of the Fujimori administration, his institute was given public power to register 276,000 poor families as legal owners of their own property, and ten governments in Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa requested similar assistance from him.

In the ten years since, de Soto has been pursuing broader questions of economics, and now, in *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, he presents the fruits of his research. The central concept he employs is "dead capital." De Soto's researchers calculate that the poor in the third world hold more than 9.3 trillion dollars of property—but it avails them little or nothing. No laws or institutions exist by which they may use this capital as collateral for cash or credit.

The failure of analysts to recognize just how much capital the poor possess derives, in part, from a lack of technical and imaginative skill, and, in part, from charitable organizations' emphasis on the misery of the poor. The failure of governments to see the existing wealth of their own poor—and thus bring it within the legal system so that it might be multiplied and, not so incidentally, taxed—he blames on the prejudice of privileged elites and on widespread ignorance about the origins of prosperity.

Such ignorance exists even in the United States. How did illegal squatters go from being "bandits" in George

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Washington's time to "brave pioneers" in Lincoln's time? That long struggle is a story of great importance to the world, and de Soto devotes a lengthy and fascinating chapter to it. Most land in America, he points out, was settled before the Homestead Act of 1862. What the Act really accomplished was the regularizing and legalizing of squatters' claims: Between 1862 and 1890 some two million Americans claimed lands on 372,649 farms. The era of millions of "illegal settlements" lies forgotten.

One new note in *The Mystery of Capital* is the unbecoming voice of Cassandra in which de Soto warns bitterly of a coming world revolt against capitalism. One feels this is mostly rhetorical.

Another new note is de Soto's rejection of culture as an explanation for economic backwardness: "I humbly suggest that before any brahmin who lives in a bell jar tries to convince us that succeeding at capitalism requires certain cultural traits, we should first try to see what happens when developing and former communist countries establish property rights systems that can create capital for everyone."

That makes an interesting contrast to the twenty-two authors that Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington have assembled in *Culture Matters*. After a half-century of development assistance, half of the adult population of twenty-three countries (mostly in Africa) are illiterate; life expectancy is below sixty years in forty-five countries; children under five die at rates in excess of 10 percent in thirty-five countries; and democracy remains non-existent or weak in most of Africa and Asia and parts of Latin America. The three prominent theories of the twentieth century—that these failures are explained by colonialism, dependency, and racism—have lost their power to persuade. Thus the cultural theories of Alexis de Tocqueville, Max Weber, and Edward Banfield seem to offer better models.

Huntington opens his foreword by recounting how some years ago he came upon economic data for Ghana and South Korea around 1960—and noticed how similar they were. Thirty years later, South Korea is the fourteenth largest economy in the world, with a per capita income about that of Southern Europe. Ghana thirty years later has a GNP about one-fifteenth of that. Huntington concludes that "culture had to be a large part of the explanation. South Koreans value thrift, investment, hard work, education, organization, and discipline. Ghanaians had different values. In short, cultures count."

The entire book is a goldmine of suggestions, distinctions, and lively arguments. Lawrence Harrison—who helped launch the new debate about culture with *Development Is a State of Mind* in 1985—adds to *Culture Matters* a stimulating introduction and conclusion, almost daring those who disagree to match fact for fact, distinction for distinction.

The authors of the essays include Barbara Crossette, Francis Fukuyama, Nathan Glazer, David Landes, Seymour Martin Lipset, Michael E. Porter, Lucian W. Pye, and Tu Wei-Ming. Jeffrey Sachs points out the ways capitalist institutions are resisted in non-capitalist societies and suggests that capitalism may be strongly favored by geography (in coastal states, for instance). Mariano Grondona outlines twenty contrasting cultural factors that influence economic progress, such as rival ideas on competition, dissent, justice, and optimism. Carlos Alberto Montaner, in his essay on "the culture and the behavior of elites in Latin America," examines politicians, the military, businessmen, the clergy, and intellectuals. Whatever the problems of Latin America, the picture of Africa that emerges from Daniel Etounga-Manguelle's essay is bleaker by orders of magnitude.

So which is it? Is de Soto correct that institutions unlock the gate into development? Or is it culture? De Soto is surely right that simple changes in law have had a dramatic effect on economic behavior. On the other hand, at least some changes in culture are needed to propel political support for the institutional reforms de Soto calls for. Culture, not institutions, determines the success of a society. But new institutions can change a culture for the better. These two truths, like these two books, complement each other. ♦

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Scenes of Clerical Life

The life of a seventeenth-century bishop makes an improbably good book. **BY RUSSELL HITTINGER**

In 1987 Craig Harline and Eddy Put discovered, in an archive in Belgium, the daybook of Mathias Hovius, Catholic primate of the Low Countries from 1596 to 1620. In an era of European history replete with great saints and scoundrels, scholars and polemicists, explorers and artists, there is no special reason anyone should remember Archbishop Hovius. Neither the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* nor the *Catholic Encyclopedia* deems him worthy of an entry.

A Bishop's Tale
by Craig Harline and Eddy Put
Yale University Press, 387 pp., $27.95

But as Harline and Put read Hovius's daybook they began to see that the bishop's life, like a Brueghel painting, illuminated an exotic, cluttered, and unfinished world of religion and politics in the Netherlands, which was, in so many ways, the seedbed of modernity for Catholics and Protestants alike. In reconstructing the story of Bishop Hovius, the authors have given us a book of actual history that reads like the very best historical fiction. Harline and Put's *A Bishop's Life* is the history book of the year—and perhaps simply the book of the year.

Mathias Hovius was born in 1542 in the Spanish Netherlands (which included what is today Belgium, northwestern France, and the southern part of Holland). Rich in commerce, schools, and the arts, the Netherlands as a whole had nineteen cities with more than ten thousand inhabitants (Britain at the time had four). Hovius's town of Mechelen was at the geographical center of the religious wars that had devastated the Low Countries, dividing them into a Protestant republic in the north and Catholic provinces, ruled by Spain, in the south. As a young man, Hovius had seen his city sacked by English, Dutch, and Spanish armies. A semblance of order was restored in 1598 when Philip II made his daughter Isabella and her cousin Albert the archduchess and archduke of the Catholic provinces.

Restoration of political order, however, did not solve the problem that consumed Hovius's episcopal career, which was reform of the Church. In twenty-six sessions, drawn out over eighteen years, the Council of Trent (1545-63) initiated quite detailed disciplinary reforms. Although that council is usually described as creating Vatican centralization, it in fact made the local bishops chiefly responsible for enforcing its decrees: Rome produced the paperwork, but the bishops had to accomplish the reform. And they had to do so in the face of a bewildering array of entrenched rights, customs, privileges, and overlapping jurisdictions having the pedigree of centuries. At issue for Hovius was not whether the Low Countries would yield to Rome, but whether the archdiocese of Mechelen would yield to its own bishop.

By telling this tale from the bishop's point of view, Harline and Put take us into the vicinity of the real story of the counter-reformation, which proves to have had less to do with theological doctrines and polemics than with reform of daily religious practices. Unlike Italy, Spain, and most of France, the Netherlands was a place where Catholicism had to compete with Protestant churches. Though Archbishop Hovius gave his episcopal blessing to the execution of Anna Utenhove (who in 1597 was buried alive in a field outside Brussels for refusing to recant her membership in an Anabaptist fellowship, the "Family of Love"), it was the last public execution for heresy in the Netherlands. Hovius recognized that religious reform could no longer rely on this armature of the state. Catholicism would have to win by providing a better product in the religious marketplace.

A Bishop's Tale is organized around sixteen dates, beginning in April 1580, when Hovius hid in a wooden wardrobe while the city of Mechelen was plundered by Calvinists, and ending in May 1620 with his death at the age of seventy-eight. Each chapter begins with a discrete event—usually a crisis—and then opens like the panels of a triptych, letting us see the circumambient life of the bishop in his diocese.

At the outset, the reader is made aware of the fantastic size and institutional complexity of the archdiocese of Mechelen. Hovius was the shepherd of 450 parishes (400 of them rural), 13 chapters of secular clergy, with 11 rural deans, 75 convents and hospitals, 175 monastic foundations, and some 24 lay confraternities. Over the course of two decades as bishop, Hovius would ordain more than eight thousand priests, deacons, and subdeacons. And all of this was to be governed with an administrative staff smaller than that of a very small diocese in the United States today. There were no vacations, retirement plans, or rehab clinics for recalcitrant clergy. For the latter, the bishop often had to resort to locking clergy in bedrooms of his own residence. Nor was it clear which persons and institutions the bishop was entitled to govern. One hundred of his monasteries were "exempt," meaning that they came either under Roman jurisdiction or under the patronage of the prince and of various noble families. More than half the convents were similarly

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You deserve a factual look at...

The Arabs of Israel

Are they a "persecuted minority?"

The world is once again confronted with violence in Israel and its administered territories. On the pretext of one of Israel's ministers visiting the Temple Mount, the Palestinians erupted in bloody rioting, which has not yet ended and in which hundreds so far have died. Most distressing, Israeli Arabs, citizens of the country, have joined in the rioting and have suffered and caused many casualties.

What are the facts?

Israel is a Democratic Country. Israel is an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions co-exist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. About 20% of the population (over one million people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the State in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region. There are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high as and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. There are close to 1,000 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 300,000 students—just about 25 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created, Ninety percent of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 5,000 Arab students attend such schools.

Israeli Arabs Enjoy Full Equality in Law and in Fact. All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are administered by their own authorities and protected by the government.

> "Contrary to propaganda...the Arabs in Israel enjoy every civil right and have the same status under law as Jewish Israelis"

In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and the barbarity of female sexual mutilation. It has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

There is, however, one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states are the avowed enemies of Israel and dedicated to its destruction (there is "peace" with Egypt and Jordan), this exemption is granted by the Israeli government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis, and can freely move all over the country without fear of being harassed, attacked, or killed. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. In a recent poll, 70% of Israel's Arabs declared that they identified with and felt loyalty to the Palestinians, and not to the state of Israel. Significantly, however, the same percentage (70%) declared that they would much prefer to live in Israel than in any other country in the area. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately one million Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2,000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1946—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now over one million Arabs in Israel, many more than after the exodus in 1948 – a manifold increase. That alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

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exempt. When he began his work, Hovius had authority to name pastors in only 67 of his 450 parishes.

Even as we sympathize with the archbishop, who is thrown from crisis to crisis, we can just as well appreciate the splendid comedy of old-world Catholicism. The cast of characters and situations surpasses anything in Trollope's ecclesiastical novels: clerical hens laying their eggs on the altar; sporting canons abandoning choir for a leisurely life of trout-fishing; Jesuits crossing diocesan boundaries to poach upon vocations; midwives raising stillborn babies from the dead; parishes rebelling over tithes; vagrant mystics and exorcists edifying and fleecing the flock; and every manner of sexual mischief, decorously called "peasant games," between priests and nuns.

In its twenty-fifth session, the Council of Trent decreed that bishops, "under pain of eternal malediction," and princes, "under pain of excommunication," must restore walls enclosing convents. Given the politics of the era, this was easier said than done. A single convent could come under four different jurisdictions: Rome, the crown, a mother-house in another country, and the bishop. In the diocese of Mechelen, nuns of the Abbey of Grand Bigard, a twelfth-century foundation, produced ancient papal seals certifying their exemption from the local ordinary, if not from the walls themselves. They made appeals to the apostolic nuncio in Brussels, appeals to Rome, and appeals to the archduke's privy council. Only Hovius's dogged persistence would win this one small increment of reform in a single nunnery.

A Bishop's Tale reminds us that the old religion shaped a culture that would not easily surrender its diverse customs and liberties—good or bad—to "modern" authority. Certainly not to Protestant authority; but, as the archbishop was reminded every day, not to episcopal authority either. This was a culture of incessant litigation. We are introduced, for example, to the apostolic protonotary Henri Costerius, expert on werewolves, relics, and ecclesiastical law. Eventually exposed as a fraud on all counts, he was sentenced to solitary confinement with no visitors "except his lawyer." The authors were surprised to discover how the "hiring of lawyers was common among even rural folk of modest means."

In fact, everyone had rights. The crown had the right to nominate bishops, important abbots, and canonries, as well as the right to make decisions about the administration and disposition of any church properties touched by its patronage. Canonries were the most entrenched, and often corrupt,

Yale University Press

power in the diocese. Trent decreed: "They shall . . . at all times wear a becoming dress, both in and out of church; shall abstain from unlawful hunting, hawking, dancing, taverns, and games; and be distinguished for such integrity of manners, as that they may with justice be called the senate of the Church."

Cathedral chapters, however, were not easily subdued. When the bishop tried to enforce the reforms, he fought "against tradition, against chestfulls of sprawling noble genealogies and papal bulls."

Priests, too, had rights—to tithes, to quartering their animals in church during certain seasons. Nobles often had rights to tithes, which they had purchased from priests or other ecclesiastics. Laity had customary rights to apportion tithes to crop, season, and a myriad of other special circumstances. Archbishop Hovius insisted that the secular arm enforce proper respect for the Sabbath and Holy Days. But the Sabbath decree of 1598 had to recognize rights of millers to work after five in the afternoon; rights of exemption for bakers when there are three feast days in a row; the right of butchers to make sausage after Vespers on feast days; not to mention various and sundry rights of glass makers, fishers, dance teachers, and anyone "fleeing from soldiers." Church wardens and magistrates had rights. Scholasters who oversaw education had rights to supervise and approve all schools, and these often conflicted with extra-territorial rights enjoyed by religious orders such as the Jesuits.

Archbishop Hovius often had occasion to be reminded of his episcopal motto, "Patience Conquers the Mighty." He had to win over the diocese by what must have seemed frustratingly small increments of reform: installing semi-public confessionals (the private "reconciliation rooms" were a source of much mischief), erecting a new convent enclosure, or persuading an abbey to cough up its income to support a seminary. Hovius did not hesitate to deploy his diocesan bailiffs or secular police in some cases, but these were used sparingly.

Harline and Put conclude that "not even in the control of its pastors was the church of the Catholic Reformation the monolith it was later imagined to be." Though the Council of Trent had many characteristics of a "modern" reform movement—above all, in its ambition to make practices conform to documents—*A Bishop's Life* demonstrates that it was not, in fact, a revolution. Reform for Hovius never meant destroying the religious culture.

That kind of radical revolution wouldn't come until two centuries later, when, in 1789, the French revolutionary armies swept into the Low Lands and sacked the town of Mechelen once again. That is also when the chest containing the heart of Mathias Hovius finally disappeared from the cathedral of Mechelen—along with the rich world in which he had lived. ♦

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Valley of the Dahls

The misanthropic stories of Roald the Rotten.

BY BRIAN MURRAY

Roald Dahl was, by his own admission, a slow and finicky writer who went daily to his desk only to produce two or three stories per year. A large man, loquacious and gruff, he nonetheless favored tight and very tidy prose. He liked to "cut and crystallize" each piece, as he once wrote, until it could be cut and crystallized no more.

Such persistence paid off. Dahl's literary career, although somewhat slow in starting, prospered for forty years. From the early 1950s to the 1970s, Dahl's macabre and blackly comic short stories appeared regularly in leading magazines and in such collections as *Someone Like You* (1954) and *Kiss Kiss* (1959). And, starting in the 1960s, Dahl found increasing fame as a children's author with such titles as *James and the Giant Peach* (1961), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964), *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1970), *The Twits* (1980), and *Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes* (1982). Late in life, Dahl liked to describe himself as a modern day pied piper who could "knock at the door of any house where there was a child" and be duly accorded a warm welcome and a cup of tea.

Skin and Other Stories
by Roald Dahl
Viking, 144 pp., $15.99

The Umbrella Man and Other Stories
by Roald Dahl
Viking, 288 pp., $16.99

The Mildenhall Treasure
by Roald Dahl
Knopf, 80 pp., $22.95

This was no idle boast. At the time of his death, in 1990, Dahl was easily the world's most successful children's author. Ten years later, Dahl's books continue to sell by the millions, and—in Britain, certainly—still tend to finish first whenever pollsters ask kids and adolescents to list their favorite books. Last March the British press widely reported that a "World Books Day" survey had named Dahl "the nation's all-time favorite author." Dahl bested not only Austen and Dickens, but J.K. Rowling, the creator of Harry Potter, who took second place.

Thus, although Dahl is gone, the Dahl Industry rolls on. The 1990s brought inventive film adaptations of *James and the Giant Peach* and *Matilda*. And "new" books by Dahl continue to appear. Two of these, *The Umbrella Man* and *Skin*, collect many of Dahl's earliest—and best-known—short stories and aim them at a fresh generation of adolescent readers; *Skin*, indeed, advertises itself "as an introduction for teenagers to the adult writings of one of the greatest storytellers ever." A third, *The Mildenhall Treasure*, first ran as a feature story forty-five years ago in the *Saturday Evening Post*. *The Mildenhall Treasure* tells the tale of Gordon Butcher, a Suffolk farmer who—while plowing a field—unearths a vast cache of Roman silver, "the greatest treasure ever found in the British Isles." Butcher, a simple man, earns nothing from his discovery, now housed in the British Museum. (This new edition exists mostly to show off Ralph Steadman's illustrations.)

During the 1940s, moving awkwardly between fiction and journalism, Dahl focused mainly on his experiences as a Royal Air Force pilot during the Second World War. Dahl had found himself in several dog fights and was seriously injured when he crash-landed his aircraft in the Libyan desert. He suffered spinal injuries, a smashed hip, and a fractured skull. He would later suggest, half-jokingly, that his urge to write had in fact been activated by his wartime smash-up and its accompanying blow to the head. For until then he displayed no literary or intellectual ambitions. Roald Dahl hailed from sturdy, successful Scandinavian stock. His father was a Norwegian shipbroker who immigrated to Wales. Harald Dahl died of pneumonia in 1920 when Roald (the sole boy among several children) was only three. But his estate was large enough to keep his widow and family afloat. Dahl's mother, Sofie, eventually moved the family to Bexley, an affluent London suburb.

At thirteen, Dahl entered Repton, a public school in Derbyshire. In his memoir *Boy* (1984), Dahl depicts Repton as a gruesome institution where younger students were routinely terrorized by their older classmates and lived in daily fear of the headmaster's cane. *Boy* drew protests from other Repton alumni, who insisted that Dahl had blackened the school's atmosphere and wildly overplayed the fervor of its disciplinary methods. To be sure *Boy*, like Dahl's other autobiographical writings, offers a brisk mix of fact, fiction, and comic exaggeration. Still, it's obvious that Dahl, like George Orwell, based his pessimistic assessment of human nature at least partly on searingly bad experiences in an English boarding school. Dahl's stories repeatedly depict psychological brutality breaking out in seemingly civilized surroundings. And whether writing for children or adults, Dahl frequently conveys the sense that human life amounts to little more than an endless scrap for domination.

Think of the fabulously harrowing aunts in *James and the Giant Peach*. Or consider "Galloping Foxley," included in *Skin*. The story's narrator, a grown man, can't forget the demeaning torment that Foxley, his more powerful schoolmate, delighted in doling out. The narrator tended Foxley's shoes,

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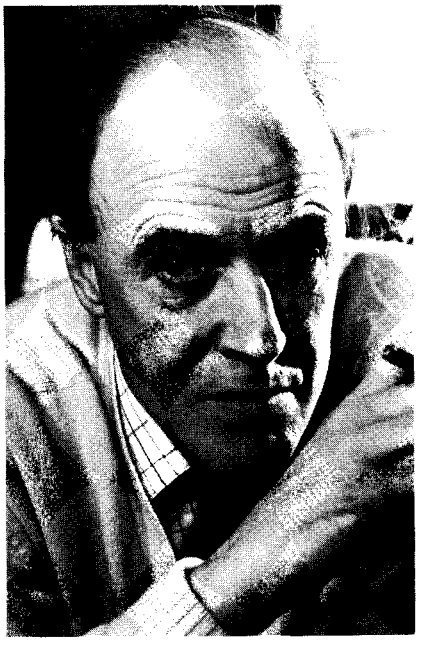

Roald Dahl in 1971

"rubbing the leather with a bone for fifteen minutes each day to make it shine." He was effectively Foxley's slave, and recalls the older boy "smashing away at me with his long, thin, white stick, slowly, scientifically, skillfully, legally, and with apparent relish, and I would bleed."

After leaving Repton, Dahl found enjoyable work as a representative for Shell Oil in what is now Tanzania. After enlisting in the RAF, Dahl saw serious action in northern Africa and the Mediterranean; in 1942, following his war injuries, he was sent to serve as assistant air attaché in Washington. In his 1994 biography, *Roald Dahl*, Jeremy Treglown notes that Dahl quickly proved popular in Washington, for "six-foot-six inch, handsome, articulate, battle-hardened heroes were rare at that time in the United States, which had only recently entered the war." He dined with the Roosevelts and played poker with Harry Truman.

In the early 1950s Dahl moved to New York, where his social circle grew to encompass writers, actors, and entertainers, among them Patricia Neal, whose film credits already included co-starring roles with John Wayne and Gary Cooper. Dahl and Neal were married in 1953, just before Dahl's *Someone Like You* appeared to much critical and popular success. Most of the stories Dahl published throughout the 1950s were, as critics noted, like very clever jokes. They often relied on readily recognizable comic types: dotty eggheads, straying husbands, and bossy wives. But they also featured stark conflict, shock endings, and the sheer pleasure of taut suspense. Not surprisingly, several of Dahl's early stories were adapted for the popular television series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.

One of these, "Lamb to the Slaughter," appears in *Skin*. In this piece a jilted wife abruptly clubs her husband to death with a frozen leg of lamb and then conceals the evidence in a particularly inspired way. In fact, "Lamb to the Slaughter" features what crime writer Julian Symons once described as "the literally perfect disposal of a murder weapon."

Dahl's first stories announce his belief that (as he told one interviewer) "people have far fewer nice characteristics than nasty ones . . . and they pretend to have far fewer nasty than nice ones." In "My Lady Love, My Dove," a snobbish woman plants a microphone in the bedroom of her houseguest and makes no apologies for her snooping. "I'm a *nasty* person," she asserts. In "Nunc Dimittis," a presumably refined and cultured man, convinced that he's been insulted, seeks to humiliate his enemy in public, for "killing," he decides, "was too good for this woman." Thus, at a very proper dinner party, he displays a full-length portrait of his foe sporting nothing but her girdle and a brassiere "as skillfully and scientifically rigged as the supporting cables of a suspension bridge."

The Umbrella Man reprints several of Dahl's best stories from the 1950s. In "The Landlady," a naive lodger enters a boarding house run by a cordial matron who also happens to be a skilled taxidermist, and who—the story implies—enjoys nothing more than stuffing select patrons after serving them poisoned tea. In "The Man From the South," a mysterious, white-suited man makes a bizarre bet with a young American sailor. The man wagers that the sailor's cigarette lighter will not ignite ten times in a row. He puts up his Cadillac—and demands the reluctant sailor's little finger in return.

Both stories, deftly paced and neatly closed, show once again Dahl's interest in exposing casual evil lurking beneath a façade of innocence—as well the per-

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version and greed he found so persistently at work in human nature.

During the 1960s, Dahl's success, and Neal's, allowed them to fill a rambling old house in Buckinghamshire—"Gipsy House" as it was famously called—with antiques, paintings, and an impressive collection of fine wine. But the decade also brought trauma and hardship. In 1960, the Dahls' four-month-old son, Theo, was struck in his pram by a speeding cab. Suffering severe head injuries, the infant developed hydrocephalus and required a valve implantation to drain fluid from his brain. The child endured several operations, as well as discomfort caused by the valve itself.

With the help of an airplane modeler, Stanley Wade, and a neurosurgeon, Kenneth Till, Dahl developed a better shunt for relieving symptoms produced by "water on the brain." The Wade-Dahl-Till valve remains in wide use, and in later years Dahl often called it his most satisfying accomplishment.

In 1962 the Dahls' eldest child, seven-year-old Olivia, died from measles. Two years later, Patricia Neal suffered several strokes that left her severely impaired, without her memory, and unable to speak or write. Dahl devoted great energy to his wife's recovery, as Barry Farrell's bestselling *Pat and Roald* (1969) revealed. Dahl developed a series of highly demanding therapeutic programs that gradually allowed Neal to resume her acting career.

At this stage Dahl showed his own growing interest in television and film. He contributed to the screenplay of the James Bond thriller *You Only Live Twice* (1967). He tried unsuccessfully to adapt Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* for the screen. He also contributed largely unused material to *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968), a hit based on the children's book by Bond's creator Ian Fleming, one of the few writers Dahl openly admired. Dahl's attempts at scriptwriting stemmed directly from the fact that he now found fiction to be both difficult and unprofitable.

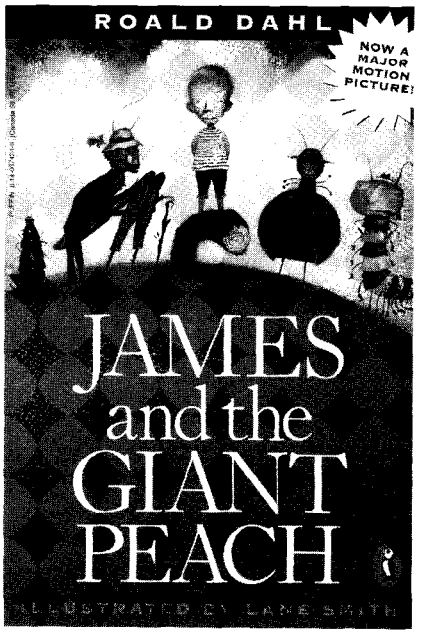
A certain creative flagging is already evident in his stories from the late 1950s. Dahl's characters are less sharply drawn; some of his narratives lack snap. In "Royal Jelly," for example, an obsessed beekeeper feeds his infant daughter great gobs of a gooey, super-nutritious substance he culls from backyard hives, and—rather too predictably—transforms her into a weird creature as insect-like as himself. In "Pig," a young man reared as a vegetarian takes a tour of a meat packing plant where he ends up shackled and skinned along with other unsuspecting beasts. The story's point isn't clear. Is Dahl ridiculing the naiveté of vegetarianism or aiming to make steak-eaters queasy? In any event, the story is marked by an unsettling sadistic glee.

In Dahl's world, only children merit much sympathy. The adult can be clever, but he's also envious, self-deluding, and dangerous—especially when his ego is bruised. This is particularly clear in "The Last Act," one of four stories about sex that first appeared in *Playboy*. It centers on Anna, a lonely widow who, while on a business trip in Dallas, arranges to meet Conrad, an old flame. Anna wants to reminisce; Conrad wants revenge. He's still outraged that Anna dropped him some thirty years before, so he gets her drunk and lures her to bed—not for romance but ruthless humiliation. He tortures her with taunts meant to shake her already unsteady psychological state. "The Last Act" is far from amusing, for one gets the sense that Dahl is, at least to some degree, cheering Conrad on.

Dahl and Patricia Neal divorced in 1983, prompting wide attention in the British press. Dahl remarried, but his later years were severely strained by illnesses, including the leukemia that killed him at the age of seventy-four. Dahl's personal difficulties did little to temper his already rough and volatile personality. During the early 1980s, for example, he expressed anti-Semitic sentiments in a review attacking Israeli military policy in Lebanon. The article—followed by Dahl's vague apologies—sparked a brief controversy in Britain, where, thanks to his children's books and years of positive publicity, Dahl was widely regarded with affection. Many readers knew him only as an eccentric but disciplined craftsman. But Dahl had long liked to shock, and many of his enemies—and friends—knew well the nasty side of a man they sometimes called "Roald the Rotten."

In a perceptive review, the British writer Claire Tomalin noted that Dahl's children's books are "funny and ingenious," and young readers are bound to respond to "the sheer *brio*" of their narratives. But these works also show a "binary view of the universe," where "things and people are either wholly good or bad" or "delicious or disgusting." And this view is even more apparent in his writings for adults—which means that the recent trend of marketing Dahl's "adult" works to younger readers in such collections as *Skin* and *The Umbrella Man* makes sense, for he remained, even in his seventies, something of an adolescent himself.

Still, the idea does give one pause, and prompts the consideration of other possibilities—*Ambrose Bierce for Boys and Girls*, perhaps. But then, we do live in coarse and cynical times, as every kid already knows, and next to *South Park*, say, or the rap star Eminem's latest CD, Roald the Rotten looks positively tame. ♦



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George, which tried to cover politics as pop culture, is being shuttered, ... parent company Hachette Filipacchi said yesterday.
—*Washington Post*, January 5, 2001

Demise Of Magazine

GEORGE, *From C1*

like Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite before them. Its demise leaves the public discourse cheapened, and Washington a poorer, crasser, less civil place.

But "Runway Models: How They Vote" was not the only way George magazine brought substance back into American politics. Jennifer Aniston's article "Why I'm in favor of phasing in a short-term depreciation allowance for capital goods owned by EITC schedule 4 recipients and their dependents," accompanied by a tasteful 48-page photo spread, brought new ideas (never welcome in the musty corridors of power) to a jaded Washington.

With voter participation at an all-time low, George showed that only a thin line separates politics from pressing cultural concerns of the "real voter," not just in "Elvis, Hitler in Gay Bar Sex Romp," but also in such other articles as "Ultra Slim-fast Buyers: How They Vote." George hired diligent journalists willing to dig deeper, as in its three-part series, "Cool Fashions of the Columbine Shooting Victims."

George brought Americans into the backroom world of power politics, revealing Ben Nighthorse Campbell's ostrich-skin cowboy-boot collection to be not as good as Phil Gramm's, and exposing—underneath the outward comity—a deep rift between California senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein over the Wonderbra. "House Pets of the Senate Finance Committee" revealed a previously unsuspected source of influence on legislation.

After "Gary Hart: The Haggar Slacks Years" and "Viagra Users: How They Vote," the magazine moved from strength to strength, providing a fresh perspective on national missile defense through an interview with Keyshawn

See GEORGE, *C11, Col. 3*

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Dumbing Down the Public: Why It Matters

Diane Ravitch is a research professor, New York University; distinguished visiting fellow, Hoover Institution; and member, Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

On several occasions, I have found myself in a familiar dialogue. When I complain about low expectations in the schools, my opposite number says, "So what? Our economy is doing well, we win the lion's share of Nobel Prizes, and we have enough qualified people to fill our most demanding professions." In other words, even if a third of our youngsters are not learning the most elementary skills in school, even if a third of our college freshmen must get remediation on campus, there's no cause for concern.

Behind this disagreement are two different assumptions: I assume that our education system should aim to educate everyone who comes to school; the other side says that ability is distributed along a bell-shaped curve and that we should not be overly concerned about the laggards because we will always need people to pick up the trash and sweep the streets. I confess that I get confused at this point because the current argument favoring low or no standards is coming from people who claim to be on the left.

Some evidence recently surfaced, which suggests that **a democratic society pays a price for widespread ignorance.** The *Princeton Review,* best known for its test preparation services, analyzed the vocabulary used by the presidential candidates in the campaign debates of 2000 and compared it to the vocabulary levels used in earlier campaign debates.

The *Princeton Review* obtained transcripts of the Gore-Bush debates, the Clinton-Bush-Perot debate of 1992, the Kennedy-Nixon debate of 1960, and the Lincoln-Douglas debate of 1858. It analyzed these transcripts using a standard vocabulary test that indicates the minimum educational level needed for a reader to understand a document. This test is ordinarily used to evaluate textbooks and other educational materials.

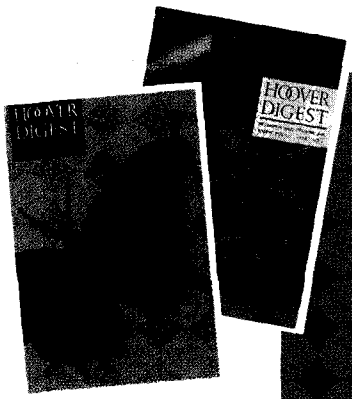
The results? In the debates of 2000, George W. Bush spoke at a sixth-grade level (6.7); Al Gore spoke at a high seventh-grade level (7.9). In 1992, challenger Bill Clinton scored in the seventh grade (7.6), President George Bush in the sixth grade (6.8), and Ross Perot at a sixth-grade level (6.3).

Our contemporary politicians, who found it necessary to speak to us as sixth and seventh graders, compared unfavorably with Kennedy and Nixon, both of whom spoke in a vocabulary appropriate for tenth graders. And they, in turn, looked sophomoric when compared to Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, whose scores, respectively, were 11.2 and 12.0.

Is it the candidates who have dumbed down their appeals or are they simply acknowledging that the public has a limited vocabulary? Candidates for public office, it is clear, must tailor their arguments to what the public can understand. Even though most Americans have completed at least twelve years of education, our candidates for president know that they cannot use big or unusual words when they address the voting public. This is what happens in a society that tolerates low expectations in our schools.

— *Diane Ravitch*

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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